

THE
BAPTISM OF CHRIST,
A
GOSPEL ORDINANCE:

BEING ALTOGETHER

INWARD AND SPIRITUAL:

Not, like John's, into Water; but, according to the real Nature of the Gospel, into the very Name, Life, and Power, of the FATHER, and of the Son, and of the HOLY GHOST.

Shewing that the Apostles' Use of Water Baptism was by no Means as an Ordinance of CHRIST, but as the Baptism of John; and that all who are baptized into CHRIST, have put on CHRIST, not only professionally, but substantially—that is, have put him on as the whole Armour of Light, and walk in him in Newness of Life.

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BY JOB SCOTT.

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CHESTER:

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1796.

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Showing that the Baptism of Water Baptism was by no
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John; and that all who are baptized into Christ, have
but one Christ, and one baptism, but indispensably
that we have put on Christ, who's Armour of Light,
and walk in him, as he lives.



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CHESTER:

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PREFACE.

THIS little treatise, reader, is written chiefly for the help and information of such as are in a state of honest enquiry, and who have not yet seen clearly beyond some of those former observances, which at the very best were but preparatory, and pointing to him, and his work on the soul, in whom they all end, and are done away forever; but partly for the confirmation and establishment of such as have been already convinced of the unshadowy dispensation of the gospel.

I HAVE long seen with sorrow, that many sincere souls are much detained from the substance, by undue attachments to the sign. I have once known and groaned under this bondage and entanglement myself; for though I was never a partaker in any of those outward ordinances, yet I was divers years blinded in my understanding, through the vail that was over me, in reading the accounts of baptism in the New Testament. I could not understand why the apostles used water, especially after Christ's resurrection, if it was not Christ's baptism; nor how men could possibly baptize with the Holy Ghost; and therefore finding men commanded to baptize, and that they did baptize with water, I concluded, very ignorantly, that water was commanded by Christ.—This conclusion, I have since seen, was the natural result of inexperience, in an anxious investigation of things not known by mere human wisdom, or creaturely abilities, but only spiritually discerned; and as my mind was sincerely engaged to see for myself, and avoid all deception, it pleased him who has the key of David (after I had passed several years of doubt and hesitation, sometimes

concluding I should before long be baptized in water, and then struck with an inward and feeling conviction of its utter insufficiency towards effecting the renovation and cleansing which my soul at times longed for) to open my understanding, chiefly by his own internal operations and illuminations in my enquiring mind, without much of any instrumental means, either reading or hearing; so that I saw clearly (which I had too long been very dull in believing, and fearful in receiving) that Christ himself in spirit had long time been striving with me, moving in me, wooing, calling, knocking, checking, restraining, constraining, and powerfully impressing my mind; but I knew him not, and in that inward and immediate way sought not after him. When, alas! had I but known the gift of God, and who it was that inwardly talked with me, I might have asked of him, and received, the living water of his heavenly kingdom; as afterwards I did, to the full satisfaction of my thirsty soul. And when this became my joyful experience, wherein the beloved of my soul met with me, as with many others, in the garden, saying, "Eat, O friends—drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1, I became perfectly satisfied, that outward bread, wine, and water, were no part of the baptism or supper of the Lord, nor any way necessary to his anointed, in things pertaining to salvation. It was not very long after this, before I not only believed, but knew, by most consolatory experience, that men, even in our day, though helpless of themselves, are through divine assistance enabled, instrumentally, in a very powerful and heart-watering manner, to baptize with the Holy Ghost. For being now engaged to feel after God, if happily I might from time to time renewedly find him, he was not only pleased in these my silent approaches, in religious meetings, and more retired waitings, to arise in me immediately, with the brightness of a morning without clouds, and powerfully to manifest himself to me and in me, as a fountain of living waters; but was also graciously pleased to send among us, of his servants, such as were well qualified

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fied to do the work of evangelists, and who being largely acquainted with the soul-saving baptism of Christ in themselves, were so filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake so demonstratively, in the life, evidence, and divine virtue and vigour of it, that it was like the oil poured on Aaron's head, which ran down to the very skirts of his garment—it even reached, overflowed, and filled, my poor soul.

MUCH I could write respecting these blessed days of my espousals, but enlargement here may be improper; I shall therefore just say, that had I not felt living desires that others may come to a full participation of the same blessed experience, and that none may be longer unprofitably amused and detained, by lifeless signs and symbols, from the all-sufficient substance, thou reader, had never heard from me in this way.—I know many find their interest in keeping up a show in these things, and representing them of exceeding great importance.—I have no doubt many very sincerely urge them upon their friends and acquaintance, as believing them injunctions of the gospel; but I am also sadly sensible that too many “seek their gain from their quarter,” and obtain it, by keeping up a lifeless round of prayers, preaching, singing, eating, drinking, dipping, sprinkling, &c. and am convinced beyond scruple, that the mammon of unrighteousness, this way increased, is a powerful obstruction to the coming of the kingdom of our Lord, in life and power, unclouded and uneclipsed by the retention of vailing and darkening observances.—Babylon is not yet so fallen, as to rise no more: she is still lurking in a mystery.—She is still mystery Babylon the great, and still the mother of many harlots—thousands are ensnared among some or other of her daughters, and are not aware of her cup.—May the Lord graciously preserve the honest hearted, of every denomination, from the harmful influences of all her many and artful forceries, and keep alive their hunger and thirst after true righteousness.—I have no doubt but that, if I am finally so happy as to reign
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in life by Jesus Christ, my only hope and Saviour, I shall be there accompanied by thousands, who have through their whole lives lived under the veil, as to outward ordinances; but who, having in great sincerity done what they believed was their duty, in singleness as unto God, and not unto men, are and finally will be well accepted of him, who seeth not as man seeth, but looks through all outside things to the heart. And yet, on the contrary, I do firmly believe many, who have began and ran well for a season, have been by degrees, as outward things have become more and more considerable with them, drawn more and more from the true hunger, and been more and more easy and satisfied with little or nothing of the true bread, water and wine, of the kingdom, till at length they have centered in formality, and sat down in a rest short of the soul's salvation.—That thou mayst shun this dangerous rock, dear reader, and be preserved living and growing in the holy root of divine life, to the end of thy stay here, and finally admitted to the joys of the blessed, forever to adore and bless the God of all grace and true consolation, is the prayer of thy sincere friend, and willing servant in the labour and travail of the gospel,

THE AUTHOR.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST,

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&c.



CHAP. I.

Of the regular order and succession of divine dispensations. Signs and figures pointed at life and substance. Hence Christ deferred his gospel ministry, till John's course in a baptism, but figurative of his own, was fulfilled. John's baptism and Christ's are type and antitype. Christ sent his disciples to baptize with his own baptism. So breathes on them the Holy Ghost. Great wisdom even in the timing our Lord's baptism by John, also in his answer to John. John preached the kingdom but at hand. In its nature and fulness, it is after, not before, nor joined with the type. John prepared the way. Some took the kingdom by force. All types end in the antitype. Christ's baptism cleanses thoroughly, as John's was total immersion. A picture, as truly a man, as water baptism Christ's. A single eye full of light, and then the shadow is behind us. Christ was baptized in water, not to continue, but fulfil, that decreasing sign; and so to make way for the increasing substance. He also ate, and thus fulfilled the passover.

IT is very observable, that our Lord Jesus Christ deferred the open and express promulgation of the gospel of the kingdom till John the Baptist, his immediate forerunner, had fulfilled his course; and that not before, but after, John had finished his preparatory ministration, ceased the voice crying in the wilderness, prepare, &c. quite ended his own decreasing

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creasing work in that outward elementary baptism, which as a sign was to precede and prepare the way for Christ's, and was shut up in prison; he, the Lord of life and glory, the end and ender of all typical dispensations, immediately entered upon the publication of the gospel word; the new, the increasing and ever-continuing dispensation of life, substance and salvation.—For we read, Mat. iv. 12, "now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." And verse 17, "from that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This kingdom, now so near at hand, and which John had just before proclaimed to be so, was and is inward and spiritual; for our Lord himself declares, "the kingdom of God is within you," Luke xvii. 21. And it is clear that he waited for John's course to be first fulfilled, before he ever began publicly to preach it. See also Mark i. 14, 15. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." The gospel is not sign or figure, but life and substance, the "power of God to salvation," free from all types and shadows, being the last and lasting dispensation; and which was not to commence in its general fulness, till after all others. Christ is often spoken of as coming after John; and John, as going, or coming, or being sent before Christ: and therefore as John's course in the very last of the shadows, water baptism, was now completed, the great minister of the sanctuary very pertinently, at the very beginning of his own gospel preaching, proclaimed, the time is fulfilled. I know not what words he could have used more proper and significant to introduce the glorious gospel, and teach mankind that all signs were to end in the substance. And from a sincere wish for the real good and solid information of mankind, I desire this one word, fulfilled, in this and divers other places,
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may be specially noticed, and deeply considered. It is of vast importance.

AND why did Jesus wait till John's course was fulfilled? why, then, immediately on hearing of his imprisonment, did he begin to preach the gospel of the kingdom as then just at hand? and why was he so careful, at his very entrance on this great work, to make this special declaration, "the time is fulfilled?" There is deep instruction in it all. He knew the times and seasons, though many who could discern the face of the sky, and had understanding in the forebodings of change in regard to the weather, were and are ignorant of the signs of the times; and through this ignorance many did, and many still do, retain the shadow out of all proper season. But Christ, as he knew, so he carefully observed, the right time. He would have all things pertaining to his kingdom, especially his own immediate transactions, take place in their proper seasons. He would not hasten his first great miracle in Cana, of turning water into wine, even though his own mother solicitously prompted him to that glorious exertion of his divinity.—He would not go up to the feast, till the right time. So neither would he begin his own public ministration (which was for the ending of all shadows, the abolition and blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances) till John's (which was much in the shadow) was fulfilled. "The law and the prophets prophesied until John." John was himself both a prophet and under the law, yet he and his ministration were until Christ. His coming after the rest of the prophets, being sent immediately before the face of the Lord, and to prepare his way, in no wise hindered his being a prophet himself. Christ testifies, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater, Mat. xi. 11. He also says, Mat. v. 17, 18, "think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and

earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Here we see he came to fulfil both the law, and the predictions or the prophets. Accordingly we read of divers things said to be done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, or spoken aforetime. Hence, though John came after the others, and as it were reached from them to Christ, yet he too came under the law, and was one among the prophets, which Christ came not to destroy, but whose predictions and forerunning dispensations he came to fulfil. John's prophetic declaration was eminently pertinent, in regard to the great work of Christ in gospel baptism, the sanctification of souls; and so was his figurative immersion: and Christ, in his saving baptism, amply fulfils both the prophecy and the sign. Christ was "made under the law" himself, Gal. iv. 4; then surely so was John. And seeing John's watery ministration was to prepare Christ's way, and lead to his saving baptism; Christ having thus carefully deferred his own public ministration till John's was fulfilled, as soon as this was done, and John cast into prison, the right time being now exactly arrived, he went forthwith, on hearing of John's imprisonment, into Galilee; and there and "from that time began to preach," and proclaim the word and gospel of that unshadowy dispensation and kingdom, which ends and fulfils all mere signs and figures, and is to increase and remain of perpetual continuance. Hence Peter declares the word "was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached," Acts x. 37; and may we not safely conclude, from Peter's so particularly mentioning this, as being after John's baptism, and from the evangelist's mentioning it as after his imprisonment, that they had heard our Lord express his acting on special principle in thus deferring his own public ministry, till his forerunner's, in that forerunning baptism, was fulfilled; and especially as his going into Galilee, to begin his said public ministry,

nistry, is expressly said to be, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaus the prophet?" Mat. iv. 14.

THUS it seems he acted with special design, both as to the place where and the time when he began the open publication of the glorious gospel. It was therefore with divine pertinency, that as he began this gracious publication, he first of all announced "the time is fulfilled." His hour was now come. For well knowing when it was and when it "was not yet come," he had now waited till John had first preached, according to Paul's testimony, "the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel;" and so had "fulfilled his course." See Acts xiii. 24, 25. All this tends forcibly and beautifully to open both the necessity of his being baptized of John just then when he was, and the meaning of his answer, when John forbade him. John knew his own baptism was not saving, was not Christ's; but was to decrease and end in Christ's, being only designed for our Lord's manifestation to Israel, and to prepare the people for his saving baptism.—And knowing this, John plainly and honestly testifies, that he should be made manifest to Israel, "therefore am I come baptizing with water," John i. 31. This plain and full testimony, from the mouth of John himself, at once evinces that his baptism, being but with water, was far different from Christ's, and inferior to it; and that it was to introduce, or as a sign to assist in turning the minds of the people to look for, receive and submit to the burning, purifying baptism of the gospel.—In short, water baptism and Christ's are plainly type and antitype: and accordingly Peter, speaking of the baptism which now saves, uses the Greek word antitypon, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

PETER doubtless knew the type or figure could not save. It is "the ingrafted word which is able to save" the soul, James i. 21. Christ sanctifies.

tifies and cleanses the church "with the washing of water by the word," Eph. v. 26. This "ingrafted word," this sanctifying "washing of water by the word," is all inward and spiritual. It is the antitype of the divers washings under Moses, and equally so of water baptism, in every form. This cleanses the soul, as outward water does the body, and puts away the filth of the spirit, as that does the filth of the flesh. Hence, and hence only, it is saving: herein is the alone propriety of Peter's words, "baptism doth also now save us." As Christ came to fulfil the law of commandments, contained in outward ordinances, and to end every dispensation of signs and shadows, he had many things to submit to, on purpose to fulfil the typical righteousness of those dispensations. Hence he was circumcised, kept the law, celebrated the passover, &c. On the same ground, it behoved him to be baptized in water, the last lively typical representation of his own great work of sanctification, that is, the last in the course of time preceding his beginning the publication of the gospel word from Galilee. But when he came to John to be baptized of him, John not knowing his design in it, nor why it must be so, forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Mat. iii. 14. It is not at all strange that John forbade him; for he knew his own baptism, being outward, typical, and preparatory, was to decrease and give place to Christ's. It was "unto repentance;" by a total outside immersion, it pointed out the necessity of the removal of all sin, and bringing "forth fruits meet for repentance." It was used for his manifestation to Israel, whose fiery baptism alone could effect this inward cleansing from all sin. Christ was neither ignorant of himself, nor guilty of sin. Hence he could not receive John's figurative immersion upon the same grounds as others did, neither in order to repentance and remission of sin, nor in order to be made manifest to himself. John doubtless marvelled, therefore, to see

see him come to his baptism. For though it seems he did not, before this, so fully know him to be the Christ as he did afterwards, yet on his now coming to him, it seems he had some sense and knowledge of it, and marvelled at his coming. But our Lord graciously condescended to shew on what grounds it was now necessary: that it was neither in order to repentance in him, nor to a manifestation of him to himself, nor yet to perpetuate a symbolical institution under the gospel; but, on the contrary, to fulfil it. Christ knew the sign must precede the substance. He knew the many symbols of the law were but "a shadow of things to come," Col. ii. 17; that the law, with all its figurative offerings, cleansings, and divers washings, was a school-master for a season, to lead to himself, the substance; see Gal. iii. 24. He knew "the baptism which John preached" was the peculiar sign or representation of his own, and was used to prepare the people's minds for it, and thereby prepare in their hearts the way of the Lord, and lead forward to his saving manifestation to Israel. Therefore had he began the publication of the gospel of that spiritual kingdom, which is without signs and shadows, and cometh not with outward observation, before John, the administrator of a baptism figurative thereof, had first fulfilled his course in that figurative administration, it would by no means so fully, strikingly and instructively have answered and illustrated the designs of eternal wisdom, as his deferring it till afterwards; for, how then could John's work have been strictly according to God's design in sending him? that is, to prepare the way of the Lord—to go before him—and make ready a people prepared for him; see Luke i. 17.

HENCE it was necessary, that in the course of God's divine Providence, and divers dispensations, he who has to go before our Lord in the power and spirit of Elias, thus to prepare his way, should be sent seasonably to begin and "fulfil his course," in that ministration

ministration and baptism which was in order to the manifestation of the great gospel baptizer, before the publication of that word which began from Galilee, after his baptism. Hence also it was necessary that Jesus should be baptized in the figure, and thus accomplish what he had to do outwardly in the fulfilment of water baptism, previously to that wonderful descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. For as he was to be "anointed to preach the gospel" (see Luke iv. 18.) and as this anointing was by the spirit of the Lord that was upon him, and not by his baptism in water, therefore, as the time drew near that he must enter, thus anointed, upon his public ministry, it behoved him first to submit to John's baptism, that all things might be done in proper season, and follow in regular succession, one after another.

THE Almighty had given John beforehand to understand, that he on whom he should see the Holy Ghost not only descending, but also remaining on him, "the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," John i. 33. Thus was the descent and abiding of the Holy Ghost, even on our Lord himself, pointed out as that which alone could qualify to baptize others with it; and it will hold good of all his disciples and ministers to the world's end. Therefore they have his promise to be with them by his spirit, the Holy Ghost, in the execution of his great commission, to baptize into the divine name and power of Father, Son, &c. And as all sent by him to baptize with the Holy Ghost, must be first so baptized themselves, he set the glorious example. And when he came afterwards to send them forth in the great work of baptizing, he declared with divine propriety, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And shewing plainly how that was, he "breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx. 21, 22. See how exactly he sent them to baptize, &c. as his Father sent him. His Father sending him to baptize with the Holy Ghost, breathed it, or caused it

it to descend and abide upon him. This proved and proclaimed him to be the baptizer with it; he sending his servants to baptize with the same baptism, breathed on them, that they might receive a measure of the qualification as he received of his Father. And this was truly necessary—the same work requires the same qualifications—“he that believeth on me,” (says Christ) “the works that I do, shall he do also,” John xiv. 12.

He was not baptized with water, to qualify him so to baptize others; for he baptized none in water; the work which he did in baptism, was inward, and with the Holy Ghost—the spiritual purifying fire of the Lord. He did not breathe on his disciples, and baptize them with the Holy Ghost, to qualify them to baptize others in water; that had not been sending them, as his Father sent him: it had not been sending them, nor enabling them to do the same work, and baptize with the same baptism, as he did. Had he, after breathing on them, sent them qualified with the Holy Ghost, to baptize with a mere element, it had been very different from his Father's sending him in the power and baptism of the Holy Ghost, to baptize others with the same. And as their qualification to administer his spiritual baptism was that of the Holy Ghost coming upon them; so, in his own case, the descent and abiding thereof upon him was the very thing made use of by the wisdom of God, whereby to manifest him more clearly unto John, as the gospel baptizer. Seeing, therefore, this his qualification for baptizing with his own great gospel baptism, which is after and superior to all signs, must be received from on high, before he began that glorious gospel ministry, which is also without signs, it was, as before noted, necessary for him previously to submit to that baptism, which being but a sign, was to decrease and end in the substance, which the sign pointed to.—Hence the necessity of his waiting till John had first baptized many of the people, borne testimony to one coming after him,
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and turned their minds to the necessity of his more spiritual and refining baptism.—And hence also the necessity of his receiving that baptism which was only in the sign, and to vanish as the substance was experienced; not after, but before, he received that descent and abiding of the Holy Ghost upon him, which pointed him out as the great administrator of that baptism which, in the very order of things, is after that which is but a shadow of the good things to come. Thus the type was kept in its time and place; before, not after, the antitype. But had not Christ's baptism in the type, to fulfil it, as a thing ending in the antitype, been preposterous, had it been after his glorious antitypical baptism and anointing, by the descent and abiding of the Holy Ghost upon him?—This being the case, there is evidently a very beautiful display of wisdom and propriety in our Lord's answer to John, when John forbade him. Indeed every part of it, to me, seems full of divine instruction. It satisfied John, and removed all his scruples; for though he did not at first know that Jesus must be baptized as well as circumcised, in the figure, and submit to the other figurative institutions of the law, in order to fulfil all the figurative or typical righteousness of the several dispensations preceding the gospel; yet he seems well to have known that his baptism must vanish and decrease, as being in its nature outward, and in its design but preparatory to Christ's. Hence, says he, "he must increase, but I must decrease," John iii. 30. "I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," verse 11. And thus knowing the preparatory, decreasing and terminating nature and design of water baptism, what further he wanted to know, to induce him to baptize our Lord, was, that in order properly to decrease and fulfil what he already knew must decrease and be fulfilled, the Lord of life and glory must stoop to it himself; and therefore, as soon as the blessed Jesus had convinced him of this, he readily, without more ado, baptized him.—And of
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this our Lord's answer at once convinced him, it being full to the purpose. Let us trace it.

THE very first word is instructive. "Suffer it to be so," Mat. iii. 15, as if he had said—I indeed have no need of it, no sin to repent of—nor do I wish it done to manifest me to myself; it is not at all of necessity to me in this sense; thou, John, art therefore rather to suffer it, than administer it as thou dost to others, to teach them their necessity of a thorough cleansing, and turn their minds to me and my baptism, which alone can effect it.—It is true, as thou art sensible, this is not my baptism, nor any part of my gospel dispensation: mine, all have need of: thou art right in saying thou thyself hast need to be baptized of me. And as mine is the alone-gospel baptism, it is not strange that thou admirest at my submitting to that of water; for truly it would be highly contrary to the purity and simplicity of my gospel, to perpetuate any ceremonial observances under the full sunshine thereof; but this is by no means my intention, but directly the reverse; I do it on purpose to fulfil outside things, and make way for me to introduce, and publish to the world, that gospel which is after, and to end all types and shadows: and which, for that very reason, I cannot properly even begin the publication of before; but must, in order to a regular procedure, defer till after I have submitted to this figurative baptism which thou preacheest. By which thou mayst clearly see, that in baptizing me in the figure, a thing so different from my unfigurative baptism and gospel, thou art, properly speaking, to suffer it to be so.—Next the word now is strikingly significant. "Suffer it to be so now." This important word is not used here without special propriety and design—it is the dictate of eternal wisdom; for now was the very juncture of time, now the pure unshadowy gospel dispensation was but at hand, not yet brought in. Christ had not yet suffered; nay, he had not yet even began publicly to promulgate the gospel of that
kingdom,

kingdom, the baptism of which is only spiritual; and therefore he might now properly partake of that which only pointed to it, and was to end in it. And further, now was the exact period for him to do what he had to do outwardly in fulfilling it; because John had now preached the baptism of repentance to many, if not literally, as Paul says, to all the people of Israel, Acts xiii. 24, perhaps to nearly, or quite all, in those parts.—At least, according to Mat. iii. 5, we may conclude, they of Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, had now been baptized of John, and Christ was now soon to begin his own gospel ministry, and therein to preach the kingdom of heaven, as an internal unfigurative dispensation, to the souls of men. Now therefore was the very time, in the course and order of things, for him to be baptized in outward water; the acceptable moment for John to suffer it to be so. John had, as he baptized the people, diligently preached the kingdom at hand, not yet fully come, and taught them to look beyond his outward, to Christ's inward and saving baptism.—This he powerfully and positively declared should be effected by one then among them, though they knew him not. So near was the kingdom now at hand, and fast approaching. This greatly raised their expectations. Indeed the fire of Christ's baptism began to kindle in some of their hearts; for Christ declares he came to send fire on the earth; “and what will I” (says he) “if it be already kindled?” Luke xii. 49. It truly was so in some degree in many minds, even that very fire whereby his baptism thoroughly cleanses, in its complete operation, the whole floor of the heart. Therefore it was now time for him soon to begin his public gospel testimony, which in strict propriety ought to, and in fact did, succeed, not precede, the baptism of water, which was John's—and by which, and the preaching attending it, John had thus prepared the people for Christ's, according to the express design

sign of his mission ; which was, as noted before, " to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

JOHN'S preaching, baptism, and singular life, being in the desert till the time of his shewing unto Israel, then wearing a leathern girdle, and coat of camel's hair, neither eating flesh nor drinking wine, but eating locusts and wild honey, &c. wrought greatly on the minds of many. They mused much of John ; and were anxious to know, whether he were the Christ or not. John declared honestly he was not ; but that he was vastly unworthy, in comparison of him—that his baptism was but with water, a very inferior thing, compared with Christ's—designed to prepare for it, and just serving in order to his manifestation to Israel, and then to decrease and give place to him and his baptism, which is to increase, and of the increase whereof there is no end.—John was truly modest, and sought not to defraud Christ of any of his glory ; but honestly and openly both confessed his own inferiority, and turned the people's attention from himself to his Lord, saying, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29.—Thus the time hastened—the state of things ripened.—Indeed the " kingdom of heaven suffered violence." And the minds of some, under the pressure of what they felt working in them, rushed into it as it were by force ; that is, before the full time for its more glorious and ample display and establishment, which was not to be till Christ had suffered.—Hence, says Jesus, Mat. xi. 12, " from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Their hearts were so engaged, and the working of the seed or leaven of the kingdom was so prevalent in them, that, as it were by a kind of violent anticipation, they took, or obtained, some real possession and enjoyment of the pure antitypical life, liberty, power and substance of the spiritual kingdom of God ; before that more glorious out-breaking, and

more general establishment and exaltation thereof among the people, which took place after Christ had suffered, and had fulfilled all the symbolical righteousness of signs and shadows, and triumphed over them all, nailing them to his cross! thus ascending upon high, leading captivity captive, and bountifully giving gifts unto men.

AND why is the kingdom said to suffer this kind of violence from the days of John the Baptist, but because the power of his ministry, his living testimony concerning Christ, and his baptism had greatly wrought upon their hearts? John's preaching and description of Christ's baptism was very awakening—he struck against all false dependencies—nothing would do short of fruits worthy of a state of real unfeigned repentance; no claims of outward descent from Abraham—nor any mere plungings in water, no partial cleansings or half-way reformatations; not one or two only, but every corrupt tree of the whole heart must be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Thus the axe was now laid to the very root of the tree; lopping the branches only would not do—it must come to thorough work, even to burning up all the chaff, and gathering the wheat, winnowed therefrom, into the garner of the Lord.—This doctrine was so forcibly promulgated by John, and had such effect upon some who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, that it was now time for Jesus to submit to John's baptism, in order to the fulfilment of the typical righteousness thereof, and to make way for the word, gospel and anti-typical righteousness of his own inward and spiritual kingdom among them.—Thus urgent and pressing was the necessity of our Lord's soon entering upon his own public ministration in the work of the everlasting gospel, and which he accordingly did enter upon almost immediately after John's imprisonment.—Well therefore might he, as to his baptism in water, urge it upon John to "suffer it to be so now," just now, without further delay: for thus it becometh us, says
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he, to fulfil all righteousness.—Observe the word all—for even the most outward, typical and decreasing institutions, that had really been of God, of right demanded veneration; it was a point of real righteousness rightly to observe, and rightly to fulfil them. And as Christ came to “ blot out the hand-writing of ordinances, and take it out of the way,” (see Col. ii. 13.) and so to bring his people to a single attention to the new covenant written in the heart, and of which he himself is mediator; it did truly and highly become him, seeing he came not to redeem from the bondage of the law, and rudiments or shadows of good things, by destroying; but by fulfilling, to unite with John in fulfilling water baptism; for that could no more pass rightly away, till it was fulfilled, than any other outward ordinance.—All the shadows were but for a time, and to end in the substance—and so faithful was Christ in all his work and office, that he would not suffer a jot or tittle to pass from the law, till all was fulfilled.—Hence on the same ground he says to John, “ it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” The righteousness of that ordinance of water baptism, was at best but under or during the law of outward commandments. Immersion in water was enjoined and often been practised among the Jews before, and baptism was in some sort and on some occasions used as an initiatory ordinance among them. John indeed used it somewhat differently, but both he himself and his baptism were previous to the abrogation of the ceremonial law, which continued in force till several years after he had quite fulfilled his course, even till our Lord’s resurrection.

INDEED Jesus himself enjoined its punctual observance; so true is the Apostle’s testimony, that he was “ made under the law.” Gal. iv. 4; and was under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the Father, verse 2: so that the expressions of the law and Prophets prophesying until John, are of no more authority to disprove John’s being strictly under the

law, than they are to disprove his being strictly a prophet.

CHRIST declares him a Prophet, yea and more than a Prophet. And his being more than a Prophet, is the true ground of this distinction respecting the law and the Prophets prophesying until John; not that either the law or the Prophets had then ceased, but John, as great a Prophet as any born of woman, and as truly under the law, was also so much more than a Prophet, that he was the immediate forerunner of our Lord; a voice proclaiming him not as coming afar off, but as then standing among the people, or as it were a finger pointing directly to him, as then come in that body of flesh. And it is remarkable, how much John's preaching and testimony concerning Christ are confined to his soul-purifying baptism. This, and a plain, full and repeated destination and description of the very great difference between this and that with water, seems to be the main scope and subject with John. And there is much divine wisdom and propriety in its being so; for John was the only administrator of water baptism, even specially ordained, and sent of God, as such. He ran not of himself, as it is to be feared many now do; God sent him, yea sent him expressly to baptize with water, according to John i. 33; and why? plainly "that Christ might be made manifest to Israel," as before noticed.

Now, therefore, as baptism in water was that peculiar outward action, or ordinance, which was chosen and directed of God, to prepare the way of his Son, introduce and manifest him to Israel; we may depend upon it, it was because he would have him specially manifested and introduced to their notice and acceptance, as the great gospel baptizer, refiner and purifier of souls. — In short, the baptism of Christ comprehends so much, so nearly all, in the work of sanctification, and creation anew in him, that the Father Almighty, in his unlimited goodness, and good will to men, took special care that

that John, the preparer of his way, in the power and spirit of Elias, should be expressly sent before him, baptizing in water, as a lively resemblance and representation of his great work, in thoroughly cleansing the floor of the heart. This was John's proper business. Hence he is repeatedly and almost constantly called John the Baptist, or baptizer, as some translate it. He went before the face of the Lord, (baptizing men's bodies) to prepare his way as the baptizer of souls. For this reason, he dwells almost wholly on the description of Christ's baptism, the manner of his effecting it, the operations and effects of it, and the very great superiority of it to that of water.

IN words, he fully and forcibly inculcates, that in its complete operation it effects an entire purification—no corrupt or even unfruitful tree is to be left—nor chaff remaining with the wheat.—The fire of this baptism is holy, yea the fire of the Holy Ghost; and where the heart submits to its influence, it is, so long as filth remaineth, truly unquenchable; it burns till all is consumed, till the dross, and tin, and, what is more, the reprobate silver (however specious in appearance, and current among many for true devotion, and real religion) is separated and done away from the gold; for the vessels in the Lord's house spiritually are made of beaten gold, such as have endured the Lord's fire, and been refined in his furnace; for this only can bear the hammer, so as thereby to be beaten and formed into chosen vessels in his holy house, which "holiness becometh forever." See Psalm xciii. 5. And as his house is a house of holiness; so the way of his ransomed is a "way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it," Isai. xxxv. 8. None can walk in it but in proportion as they are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and purifying fire, and thus made fit vessels for the Lord's house; for the Prophet Zachariah, xiv. 21, winds up his prophecy of gospel times with a positive declaration, that in that day "every pot in Jerusalem

and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts."

THAT this state might be attained, we have seen that John's description of Christ's baptism, even to the very inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judca, outwardly (though I think little of locality in this case) represents it as effecting thorough purification, as perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. And this he not only teaches in words, but shews them in his manner of baptizing, plunging them all over in water, as if he would have riveted it in their minds, that nothing short of complete sanctification would answer.

HE indeed baptized them in water, and even, in that, though merely a figure of the one gospel baptism, he plainly held forth perfection, or perfect cleansing, or why did he wash them all over? If Christ's baptism effects only a partial, half-way cleansing in this life, would not a partial, half-way, washing, or sprinkling, more properly have represented it, and therefore have been a more proper way to have prepared the way of the Lord, and furthered his manifestation to Israel?

SURELY his forerunner ought so to prepare his way, as to give a just idea of him, and of his work; and so to represent and shadow out his baptism, as to raise proper sentiments and desires in the well-disposed respecting it. And this, in fact, he was very careful to do; for as he was so much more than a Prophet, that he was specially appointed, and sent to prepare Christ's way, and eminently to contribute, by that very significant figure, towards his proper manifestation to Israel, he fell not behind the rest of the Prophets in testimony to the fulness and completeness of that baptism, whereby Christ saves his people, not in, but from, their sins. He was so faithful to his trust, that, not satisfied with repeated metaphorical illustrations of it by word of mouth, as of the axe, fan, and fire, yea unquenchable fire, all centering in one point, that of absolute
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and full purification ; he went one step further ; he dipped great numbers of them so totally into the water, that if they would understand any thing by it of the nature and extent of Christ's baptism, they could scarcely understand any thing short of what was typically intended by it. And having thus powerfully prepared the way of the Lord, by preparing the people to receive him in the administration of that baptism which saves the soul from sin, it was now time for the Lord himself to be baptized, in that very figure by which his baptism was thus strikingly represented ; not to perpetuate it, and induce the people to think more highly of it ; but, quite on the contrary, so far to fulfil it, as to make way for that represented by it. For those outward observances by which the substance was represented (as the figure of a man represents the man it is the figure of) were none of them any more the substance itself, than the figure of a man is the man.

SOME are fond of the mere picture, the lifeless figures of their dearest friends, in their absence ; but few are so weak as to pay much regard to the picture, when they are in actual enjoyment of the presence, the endearing company, and sweet conversation of their friends.

Water baptism is not a whit more the baptism of Christ, than the figure of a man is the man. And they who are now baptized therewith, and eat and drink outward bread and wine, in remembrance of Christ, have, in these performances abstractedly, no more of the real baptism and supper of the Lord, than a man may have of his friend, in the picture of him. I say not that a man cannot use these things, and at the same time enjoy something of the substance signified by them. A man may enjoy something of the real and delightful presence of his friend, and yet have his picture in the room, and sometimes look at it ; but whenever his attention is fixed closely upon the picture,

picture, it is infallibly diverted in the same proportion from his friend, though then alive and present. And so it is in these figurative observations. In proportion as they are objects of attention, the mind is diverted from, or stops short of, the thing signified. And hence I think it generally holds good, that those who are very tenacious of them, most zealous in their use, urge them the most pressingly on others, and most liberally censure and condemn those, who, believing them to be no gospel ordinances, conscientiously decline them; are less livingly sensible of the life and substance, than some others, who, though they also use them, are far less built up in and tenacious of them. At the very best, they are but shadows of the good things.—“If thine eye be single” (to the light of Christ) “thy whole body shall be full of light.” See Mat. vi. 22. Only keep thine eye single, and fixed upon the outward sun, and the shadow will be behind thee, and out of thy sight. Turn about, and fix thine eye full on the shadow, and then the sun will be behind thee; and whilst thou art fixed in attention to the shadow, thou wilt see little or nothing of the face of the sun. Thus some who begin in the Spirit, turn about, and seek to be made perfect in the flesh, or in outward ordinances. But granting thy attention not singly to the shadow, yet try it a thousand ways, and thou shalt never be able to pay either less or more attention thereto; but thou wilt be obliged to have thy attention proportionally less to the sun, than it would be, wert thou equally attentive, and that attention singly directed to the sun.—In like manner, the man whose eye is single to the divine light of Jesus in his own heart, and whose attention is steadily to the work of his baptism there, has as much more true and substantial experience of the blessed and saving operation and effects thereof, than the man, who, equally attentive, suffers his attention to be divided, and partly diverted to the outward figures; as a man in close and single attention to the sun, has more of its light, and sees more of its real brightness and glory, than he who observes an equal attention

tention on the whole, but suffers it to be divided between the sun and the shadow.—And this I take to be the very ground and reason of our Lord's faithful fulfilment of all such figurative righteousness, that so his servants might press forward to the substance signified, and figured out thereby. Paul told the Galatians, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," Gal. v. 2. This must amount to thus much at least, that in proportion as they relied on, or were taken up with, attention to that outward performance, they were diverted from Christ—and this is just as true of water baptism, and every other outward symbol.—I suppose many may readily drink it down, that so certainly as a man is outwardly circumcised, he can have no benefit at all from Christ, who yet think outward baptism an ordinance of his gospel : but what sound reason can be given, why one outward ordinance, once absolutely commanded of God, but now ceased in point of obligation, to give place to the substance once signified by it, should so much more effectually prevent our being profited by Christ, than another outward ordinance, in like manner once commanded of God, but long since as fully ceased in point of obligation, and for the same reason, to give place to the substance ?

THE truth is, every outward observation, whatever, so far as it diverts the mind from inward attention to the work of Christ, so far it prevents effectually our being profited by him. And I am sorry to perceive such numbers of professing Christians striving so hard, as I think they do, to make these things serve as a substitute for that which is saving. They evidently substitute water baptism instead of Christ's ; for they do not scruple to call it the one baptism of the gospel. They expressly maintain it to be Christ's, and apply it to many texts which evidently speak of far deeper matters ; as baptism into Christ, into his death, &c. and that which speaks of the baptism which now saves us, although the text itself declares it is not the putting away the filth of the flesh (the proper work of water) yet

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yet they insist it is water ; and so make it out, if they substantially make out any thing by it, that a figure saves us. Let none therefore marvel that Christ was so careful to be baptized in water, in order to fulfil it, before he would go forth publicly into that work, wherein he was to be the baptizer of souls to salvation ; for since we find that even his so doing is laid hold of, in direct contradiction to the whole scope and design of it, and urged as a proof of its continuance, how much greater would have been the influence of his example, towards continuing a figure in preference to the substance, had he first published his own everlasting gospel and baptism, and after that been baptized himself in water, and so baptized others ? But as it seems he intended not to baptize others in water, doubtless to guard against the force of example ; so neither would he be so baptized himself, after he had once began his own public and soul-baptizing ministry ; but very carefully did what he had to do in outward fulfilment of that type, both before he began his said ministry, and before he had gathered any disciples, yet so as to be after the rest of the people in these parts of the country had been baptized ; for it would not have seemed so proper for him to submit to an ordinance that was figurative of his own baptism, for the special purpose of fulfilling it, before its administrator had, for some little time at least, practised it ; but now John having baptized many, and raised their hopes of a more spiritual and soul-saving baptism, or, as Luke has it, “ when all the people” (meaning doubtless there about Jordan) “ were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized,” &c. and we do not read of John’s ever baptizing another person there afterwards.

Now therefore, as already evinced, was the suitable time for Jesus to be baptized. And though this was done, as before urged, not to perpetuate that sign, but expressly to fulfil it, that so all that kind of ceremonial righteousness might be fulfilled, and not a jot or tittle of it pass any otherwise away ; yet this hindered not
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the propriety of John's continuing his preaching and service in that sign, in other places, a while longer, in order to Christ's manifestation, and the preparation of his way before him, there also, until nearly the time that Christ began to publish the word openly in and from Galilee : though before Christ would do this, John had, as already proved, finished his course in that figurative dispensation, and our Lord had particularly heard of his imprisonment. After which, going into Galilee, he soon entered upon the publication of that spiritually baptizing word and gospel ministration, which, as before observed, began from thence, after the baptism which John preached, in the figure.

WHEN John proclaimed, " Behold the Lamb of God," two of John's own disciples immediately " followed Jesus," John i. 36, 37, as did several others soon after; for John's preaching, &c. had now in good degree prepared their minds to follow him, as soon as they knew him. But the disciples of John do not appear to have gone from him to Jesus, as from one outward baptizer to another. We have no account of their receiving baptism in water, after they became followers of Jesus. As that was not his, but John's, there was no need of repeating it upon those who had been John's disciples. But had that of water been Christ's, and yet distinct from John's, they would doubtless have received it.—John's preaching and baptism in water do not appear to have prepared the way of the Lord, by preparing people for a second baptism in water? but by preparing them for that of the Holy Ghost, and purifying fire. For this were some hearts at least, if not many, now prepared.

Now therefore cometh Jesus to be baptized of John in Jordan; for it was now time those knew him, who were thus prepared for him, that they might receive him. His thus coming to John, and being first baptized in the type, and then in the antitype, the Holy Ghost from heaven, confirmed John's knowledge of him,

him, and gave a fair occasion for him to point him out, and proclaim him as the baptizer and Saviour of souls to the people ; thus opening their way to advance from the sign to the substance ; from the decreasing ministration of himself, the servant and forerunner, to the increasing one of the Son and Saviour. John could not with full confidence point him out to them, till he knew him. That could not in proper season and succession take place, by which he certainly knew him to be the great gospel Baptizer, till he had first baptized him in the figure, seeing the figures are the shadows of good things to come after them. Had Jesus received water baptism much sooner, it had been out of season, and before his way was prepared by his forerunner. Had he deferred it much longer, it had deferred their knowledge and reception of him, whose hearts were now prepared for him.—And, moreover, had he deferred it till John was cast into prison, whence he never came out, he could not have publicly received it by John ; by which reception of it from him, and thus rightly timed, he at once confirmed it, as having been a ygn of his own ; fulfilled it, as of no real use where his own is livingly known ; and gave John fair opportunity clearly to know him, and proclaim him the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

Thus John testified of him in due time, agreeably to Paul's expression, 1 Tim. ii. 6, " who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Having seen that Christ's baptism in the figure could be only suffered ; seeing the figures precede, point to, but belong not to the gospel, and that now, before the figurative dispensation was abolished, was the only proper and acceptable time for it : Let us observe, who were the only proper persons to fulfil that one peculiar sign and figure of saving baptism—" suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us." John, as the ordained administrator of water baptism, and as such, and peculiarly therein, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ, as
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the end and ender of all types and shadows, were the identical persons to unite in fulfilling this decreasing and terminating dispensation. Hence the divine propriety of the word us: "thus it becometh us." But what to do? not establish and perpetuate the old Mosaic institutions, in a round of signs and ceremonies, nor any other or somewhat varied observations in things outward and symbolical; for all these are but rudiments, and equally weak and unappertaining to the pure gospel state. What then? why, the exact reverse of all this. "It becometh us to fulfil!" fulfil what? "all righteousness." None of the great and solemn ordinances of God were so outward as to be unworthy of fulfilment. All pointed to Christ, and to his work and kingdom: but this of water baptism, as now used by John, and by him repeatedly contrasted with Christ's, or the two placed by him very pointedly, as type and antitype, required our Lord's special notice and fulfilment, previously to his own public gospel ministration. And though, as then used, it was introduced the last in course of the great shadows peculiarly representative of Christ's great work in men; yet was it almost, if not quite, the first specially fulfilled by him.

JOHN's ministration in the shadow, began too near the meridian splendor of Christ, the gospel sun, to have any long continuance previous to his glorious manifestation to Israel.—Even outwardly, as the sun advances nearer to its meridian altitude, the length of the shadow decreases. And right under the sun's full blaze, the sun being in its zenith point, shining on all sides equally, the shadow vanishes, or at least is under foot. And I believe it has inwardly, even in respect of baptism, vanished quite out of estimation and notice in the minds of some, as the spiritual sun has gradually arisen upon them; and who yet have afterwards, through the neglect of a single eye to the light, gradually receded therefrom, till (as in the afternoon outwardly) towards night, in proportion as the sun's warming and enlivening influence is lessened, the length and unsubstantial

importance of the empty shadow has greatly increased with them—they have eagerly grasped at the shadow, which in itself is nothing but a likeness of the substance. We all know a shadow outwardly is nothing—and in spirituals also this is so strictly true, that Paul says, “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing,” 1 Cor. vii. 19; and it holds equally in outward baptism, and the supper—If one shadow were any thing in the gospel, another might as well be something.—Circumcision would be as much something as baptism.—The gospel excludes them all.

LET not therefore him who is outwardly baptized suppose he has therein something that belongs to the gospel; neither let him who rejects it, either Quaker or other, think he therefore has something; for outward baptism is nothing evangelical, and the mere rejection of it is nothing.—“The new creature,” the living faith of the operation of God, working by love, is all in all, is the very substance of things hoped for, “the evidence of things not seen,” Heb. xi. 1. Thus necessary was it for all these old things to pass away, be shaken and fulfilled, that the new and living substance, which cannot be shaken, may remain.—And as John was the forerunner of Christ, and the administrator of water baptism, it belonged to him and Jesus; they were the *us*, to whose allotment it properly fell to fulfil it.—Christ had the typical righteousness of divers other figures to fulfil; hence, afterwards he celebrated the passover, and plainly pointed his disciples to the antitype of it. They must eat his flesh, and drink his blood, or have no life in them. And this he assures them is spiritual, “it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing,” John vi. 63. And even John’s work, in fulfilling these things, was not wholly confined to the outward baptism of our Lord. His constant testimony that his baptism was but with water, as he administered it to others, his lively and contradistinguishing description of Christ’s, as that which effects entire sanctification, and burns up all the chaff (not only sin, but
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figurative ceremonial observations; for these are as chaff to the wheat, and as trees that bring not forth any real good fruits of the gospel) tended much to exalt the substance above all signs in the minds of the people. And when once the substance is in due estimation, and properly exalted over all in our minds, under the gospel, the sign immediately loses its importance, and Christ becomes all in all to us.

BUT John not only divers times repeats the important distinction between baptism with water, and that with the Holy Ghost, and holds to view the comparative inefficacy, and decreasing nature and design of the one, and the excellency, all-sufficiency and increasing nature of the other: he degrades all claims of the most exact and tenacious adherents to ceremonial institutions, without the heart-purifying work of the Lord.

EVEN the zealous pharisees, notwithstanding all they could boast of relationship to Abraham, either by blood, by circumcision, or the most strict and scrupulous outward observance of the whole law of commandments, contained in (the shadowy) ordinances, he upbraids as a generation of vipers; and plainly intimates to them, that the true seed of Abraham are they in whom the axe, the fan, and the fire, of the gospel, make thorough work; and that in this way God is able to raise up children in the true and living faith of faithful Abraham, of such whose hearts were as stones. There might be such then present, whose disregard to those things, wherein lay nearly all the religion of too many of the pharisees, was such as to render them extremely obnoxious and contemptible in their view, and who yet were more easy to be brought in love with the essentials of true religion than they; though they, in the fury of their zeal against these, might strikingly exhibit the viper in spirit. I believe the inward feelings and outward deportment of many, who have considerable zeal in exteriors, are the very reverse of this in meekness, gentleness, and love.

MAY they experience a blessed increase herein; and may all ranks and denominations of Christians, beholding the excellency hereof, and its vast importance, in preference to all party attachments, and zeal for or against ceremonials, more and more press after it and into it themselves, and cherish and promote it in each other.

I DOUBT not many of the pharisees were zealously observant of the Mosaic institutions, because they verily believed it was God's will they should be so (as doubtless it was in a right way and disposition). I doubt not but some of these were moral, goodly sort of men, as to outward regularity, uprightness, and honest dealings, and here they rested, well satisfied, and despised the less observant, and less regular. But here resting (even though they might be, as touching every thing merely ceremonial, or even merely moral, pretty blameless) they were and must be far short of that, which in every age of the world has been the true righteousness, riches, and salvation of souls. These, as well as the more impure and grossly polluted within, John wanted to alarm, and shake from their false rest, and fig-leaf covering; that they might come to know the pure and living righteousness of faith, that works by love, purifies the heart, gives victory, removes mountains, and is the substance, being of the operation of God in the heart; not a mere assent to certain well-established facts, nor yet merely a full and firm persuasion of their truth and certainty; but a real and living hold on Christ the life, in inward union with him; by a deep and powerful working of the holy principle of light and life in the soul. This is that righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and pharisees, and without which Christ says we cannot enter into the heavenly kingdom. See Mat. v. 20. This, in fulness established, supercedes all signs and shadows. Hence John, by rejection of the pharisaical dependance on descent from Abraham, &c. was preparing his way, who coming after him, had much of this nature to do, among that superstitious and bigotted people; who, as
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he rightly testified, had they been truly the children of Abraham, would have done the works of Abraham ; but not being truly his seed, in the heavenly birth, and holy principle of life and immortality, wherein the joint heirship with Christ ever consisted, they were foolishly, though zealously, endeavouring to climb up some other way ; by outward performances, and exact observation of ordinances ; a kind of righteousness which never gave admittance, or brought into the kingdom. And as men have ever been prone to stop short in these, and rely more or less upon them, as things of substantial benefit in themselves ; God was pleased, in the fulness of time, to send his Son made of a woman, made under the law, and purposely brought under the observance of these things, for their fulfilment, in order expressly to blot out, remove and take out of the way ; that a more signal attention might take place to the writing of the law in the heart ; the very life, sum and substance of the new covenant. See Jer. xxxi. 33. John's preaching tended directly to prepare for and introduce an increasing attention to these great things within, and thus powerfully contributed to promote that living acquaintance with, and single dependance on, the substance, which is the only thing that ever rightly qualifies the mind to see beyond, and thoroughly, understandingly, and profitably renounces and relinquishes the sign. This was fulfilling his commission, preparing the way of the Lord, pointing out, declaring and promoting the decrease of all figurative righteousness, including even that of his own baptism ; and assisting in the fulfilment thereof, in order to the increase, establishment and general prevalency of that which was before all signs, and remains to the faithful, the *summum bonum*, the one good thing needful, the life and substance of all true religion.

CHAP. II.

John's baptism still in use after Christ was baptized; and on what grounds. Why John must decrease. Why the least in the kingdom is greater than he. Water baptism never a gospel ordinance, any more than burnt offerings, circumcision, &c. Christ's transfiguration clearly shows all these done away together, and water baptism as much as any of them, though afterwards sometimes used in condescension, as divers other figures were. John seen in the mount as Elias. Peter's conduct with Cornelius, no perpetuation of water; but rather a prudent condescension. The full dispensation of Christ, is God and man in union. Man prone to imagery. Signs were ever by indulgence. A touch upon the passover. Christ eating it, points to its antitype, the inward feast, and communion of saints.

ALTHOUGH on very sufficient grounds, as already evinced, our blessed Lord received that baptism which was figurative of his own, and so far as in that manner behoved him fulfilled it, previously to his entrance on his own public ministration in preaching the gospel, yet for his further manifestation to Israel in some other places, that watery sign, and the preaching accompanying it, were afterwards continued by John, till some little time before the blessed Jesus began his said public ministry: and the disciples of Jesus having learned that baptism of John, and understanding it was for their Lord's manifestation to Israel, they also practised it, and doubtless with a view and desire of his more extensive and speedy manifestation among the people; though we have no account that Christ ever at all encouraged them therein, but an express assurance that he "himself baptized not," John iv. 2. Perhaps he might have no objection (as ceremonials were yet in use, as a school-master leading to himself, the life and substance, the pure gospel state not generally commencing till after
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his resurrection) to their baptizing others, as John had them, in the figure; well knowing that occasion might thereby be taken to turn the mind profitable from that likeness of entire cleansing, to the necessity of the thing itself, his own saving baptism; and which seems to have been the very design of water baptism, as used by John. No other need of it seems ever to have existed; and no other end seems to have been aimed at, by the divine wisdom, in sending John baptizing in that manner. It was to that end well adapted, and to that only. And that John knew this, seems evident by his declaring that baptism was for Christ's manifestation, by his so constantly pointing from it to its antitype,* the baptism that saves the soul; and by his acknowledgment that himself must decrease, and Christ increase. Had John been the administrator of a gospel ordinance, and therein abode faithful, he might, instead of decreasing, have increased therein: but being the administrator of a figurative ordinance, in its very nature, end, and design, decreasing; he, as its administrator, must decrease: for though as great a prophet as any born of woman, yea, as Christ declares, "much more than a prophet," the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way of the Lord; yet truly, as the Lord himself further asserts, Mat. xi. 2, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he;" that is, greater than John, as John the Baptist; for it is expressly as John the Baptist, that Christ says this of him; and in this sense it will for ever hold true. For though as a saint and servant of God, as a prophet of the Most High, John was great, yea very great, in the heavenly kingdom, "a burning and a shining light," as Christ still further testifies, John v. 35; yet that gospel kingdom which John proclaimed as near at hand, and prepared the way for, being void of all mere figurative ordinances, and operating wherever it cometh in its

* The word in the common translation rendered figure, 1 Pet. iii. 21; speaking of the baptism which now saves us is antitypon; and surely it is the antitype, and not the type or figure, that is saving.

its full glory to their fulfilment, abolition, out-blotting, and entire removal out of the way; the least in the pure spirituality thereof (having seen and advanced, beyond and to the disuse and total rejection of all such signs and figures, as being comparatively mean and beggarly elements, of use only till the seed came, and at best but shadows of the good things to come) is and ever must be in this respect greater than John, as John the Baptist; the administrator of one, though a very significant one, of those figurative ordinances. And even though John should sit higher, shine brighter, and be far greater in the kingdom of eternal glory, than many of these, yet as the Baptist, or baptizer in water, he was under a dispensation that was vastly low in comparison of that pure gospel state which these little ones all witness in the new covenant dispensation; which water baptism could no more be a part of, or belong to, than circumcision, burnt-offerings, or any other rituals of the Mosaic dispensation. And if Moses, however faithful in all his house, as a servant, must, as to his law of ceremonies, his dispensation of signs and shadows, decrease and give place to the Son, surely so must John. The weakness, outwardness, and insufficiency, on account of which the shadows of Moses have vanished, are as apparent in water baptism, as in any of these; and it is of as much real necessity that this be decreased, fulfilled, and cease, in order to the true and pure enjoyment of its antitype, the saving baptism of Christ, as that circumcision, and the divers washings and offerings of the law should cease, for the same reason; or in order to the right enjoyment of their antitype.

It is rather mournful to see so many religious, good people—people who love God, and are in good degree enlightened, entangled as it were in the bondage of outward and typical ordinances, in these antitypical gospel days. What volumes of controversy, and not always in the sweetest temper, have been and are written, and from time to time, even unto this day very zealously

lously spread, read, and rejoiced in, which yet contain little or nothing relative to the life of God in the soul, the one soul-saving, sanctifying baptism of the gospel, or the one soul-satiating communion of saints, and supper of the Lord; but are filled with learned or unlearned argumentation, about things as foreign to the true Christian life and dispensation, as the sacrificing of bullocks, rams, and lambs!

I FEEL real tenderness towards those who are not yet so translated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, not yet so enlightened as to rise superior to their attachments to elementary and figurative observances; and I wish not unnecessarily to hurt the feelings of one sincere soul. I know some such hold water baptism, and what they call the other sacrament, in great veneration; and I do sincerely desire them not to take offence at my freely endeavouring to evince them to belong not to the gospel. It is love in great sincerity that engages me to shew them that these things stand exactly on a level with the long ceased ceremonies of the law, in point of obligation under the gospel. It would be as strictly a gospel controversy, were men now to write volume after volume respecting the due and precise manner of offering the ancient daily sacrifice; as is that about immersion and sprinkling, or that respecting the various opinions and modes of administration in what is called the Lord's supper. Thou need have no more, O thou true-hearted Christian traveller, to do with these, than the former: it no more imports to thy real gospel duty, or to thy growth in the divine life, to understand and practise in the most precise manner, according to ancient original institution and usage in these, than in the others. Think of what entire insignificance it is, to controvert points respecting the offering of the lambs, "one in the morning, the other at even," as ordained of old to be done day by day for a continual burnt offering, Numb. xxviii. 3, 4. Think how unimportant to dispute, whether a fifth or a tenth part of an ephah of flour, or whether mingled with

with a third, fourth, or eighth part of an hin of beaten oil, would now under the gospel be the most acceptable meat offering to the Lord; and thou mayst perhaps perceive to obtain a true glimpse at least of the real insignificancy to thy life and duty, as a Christian, of all the elaborate enquiries and discussions, respecting either what is the proper mode, or who are the proper subjects, of either the one or the other of the sacraments so called.

BUT seeing many pious souls are yet under the vail in these things, wishing to serve God, and fearing to offend him; and seeing it is much for the worldly interest, emolument and popularity of too many who assume the character and office of gospel ministers, to keep them still under this vail and covering, and in bondage to the beggarly elements; I am willing to use my endeavours to evince yet more fully and clearly the absolute cessation and dismission of signs and symbols, as never having pertained to the fulness of the gospel state. I think this is clearly exhibited by our Lord at the transfiguration; and I think it as much includes John as Moses; as much water baptism as circumcision; and as much the passover as burnt offerings. In short, it is evident to my mind, that the whole tendency and design of the vision was to shew the equal dismission of all those shadows of the good things to come. And that for this reason; of all the holy men of old, all the great types of our Immanuel, Moses and John in the character of Elias appeared, on this wonderful occasion, with Christ and his disciples in the mount. None else would have fully answered the design of the transfiguration. But these two, representing the complete body of signs and ceremonies, were the identical persons to appear and disappear to them, and in testimony of the disannulling of all those foregoing ordinances, as the washings, oblations, &c. under Moses, were but signs, and but until the full coming in of the dispensation of life and substance: and as the baptism used by John was also but a sign, so now, in exhibiting

exhibiting the entire abolition of both, our Lord in some sort did it by way of sign or representation. And as it requires some spiritual discernment, clearly to perceive that offerings, water baptism, &c. never were nor could be more than signs and figures, what they were particularly the signs and figures of, how long they were properly used, and when utterly abolished, so does it also require some true illumination from on high, to read and understand the mystery of transfiguration, and to see plainly that the whole drift and design of it was to teach us that the gospel, the kingdom, the baptism of Jesus, are all inward and spiritual, the antitypical righteousness which remains, and ever will remain to the true church; though all that typical righteousness, which Christ spake of in his answer to John, introductory to his baptism in the figure, be fulfilled.

WHEN God would show Abraham, Gen. xv. that his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, and after four hundred years affliction "come out with great substance," he ordered him to take an heifer, she goat, ram, turtle dove, or a young pigeon. Dividing several of these in the midst, he "laid each piece one against another." And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo, "an horror of great darkness fell upon him;" and further it "came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." A very striking representation of Israel's iron furnace of affliction in Egypt, and the burning lamp, or, as the margin reads, "a lamp of fire," very beautifully betokened their joyful deliverance, when long after the angel of the Lord led them by a "pillar of fire" from the severe exactions of their hard-hearted enemies and task-masters. Thus dealt infinite wisdom and goodness with his favoured servant, good old Abraham; by striking representations shewing him things to come, and divers other instances
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of somewhat similar representations might be adduced.

BUT passing them, we come now to that very important one, the transfiguration, and to unfold a little its genuine import and meaning, according to the degree of understanding received, I shall first endeavour to evince, that it was John the Baptist who, with Moses, appeared in the mount, though under the denomination and character of Elias. It is clear that John was the Elias, that is the Elijah, whom the Lord by the prophet promised to send to prepare the way of the Lord, Mal. iii. 1, 4, 5. This promise Mark recites expressly as fulfilled in the coming and services of John, Mark i. 2. as it is written in the Prophets, "behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

THAT this was John, is further evident by what the angel said to John's father, good old Zacharias, Luke i. 16, 17, "many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God—and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias," &c. Indeed Christ's own words are full to the purpose: he positively declares, Mat. xi. 14, "if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come;" but as he did not mean that Elias was actually come again in person, but that John was come "in the power and spirit of Elias," as before mentioned; he adds, verse 15, knowing how outward the people's minds were, and how spiritually dull they were of hearing, "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He doubtless knew that many could not so hear as to believe and receive it, in its naked signification, especially as John had denied his being Elias. These are contradictions to mere human wisdom: the ear that understandingly hears them, the Lord alone openeth.

JOHN spake truth from the heart; for when they asked him, "what then, art thou Elias?" John i. 21, they

they were so carnal and outward in their apprehensions, that doubtless John saw they so little understood the scripture prophecies and promises, that they were looking for the personal coming of Elias from heaven; and perhaps in a fiery chariot; his ascension, or taking up, having been represented as in a chariot of fire. John answering their question according to their sense in asking it, saith, "I am not;" thereby harmoniously coinciding with Christ's design in speaking in parables; for Christ thanked his Father that he had "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," Mat. xi. 2, 5. These babes are the same with those who have ears to hear, and Christ spake in parables to concur with his Father in hiding these things from the prying and investigations of this world's wisdom and prudence: for when "the disciples came and said unto him, why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Mat. xiii. 10. he answered and said unto them, "because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," verse 11. and in conformity to these designs of Christ and the Father, to make foolish the wisdom of this world, John answered, that he was not Elias; as truly he was not in the sense of the question, and yet in the sense of heaven and of the Holy Ghost, he was indeed Elias, yea, the only Elias that was sent in fulfilment of the promise, to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus. So that had he not come in the power and spirit of Elias, the promise, for aught that appears, had utterly failed.

THIS point, thus clearly established in the sacred records, contributes much towards a right understanding of the transfiguration. The transactions of this ever memorable and important scene, I have no doubt, were designed to unfold, as far as those who saw and heard them, or those who since read them, have "ears to hear," the deep mystery of the three dispensations of Moses, John, and Jesus—the entire passing away of all that was but typical in the two former, as things li-

able in their very nature, and in the designs of infinite wisdom ever meant, to be shaken and removed; that so the latter, the dispensation of life and substance, the pure spiritual unshadowy gospel and kingdom of Christ, as things that cannot be shaken or removed, might with greater clearness succeed, and remain.

To this purpose the Lord of this glorious dispensation, after testifying that some then standing there should live to see it—that is, should “not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power,” Mark ix. 1—in order to prepare some of his disciples for a more extensive and clear discovery of its purely spiritual, antitypical nature and glory, and to give as it were a clue to the same discovery to others (see Mat. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix.) in that and after ages, “taketh with him Peter, and James, and John” (three eminent instruments in the primitive church) “and leadeth them up into an high mountain, apart by themselves.” This may shew us, that in order to a clear reception of divine knowledge, our minds must both ascend above and be separated from the busy scenes of mere earthly joys, cares, and associations, as it were into the mount of sequestration, into an holy abstraction of soul, where angels ascend and descend, and the converse is at times with God. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Here our Lord “was transfigured before them, and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to “Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here.” Alas! too many think it is good to retain the long since fulfilled and abrogated symbols of good things, to this very day; and not content with, or not enough acquainted with, the one true “tabernacle of God, that is inwardly with men,” Rev. xxi. 3, are, with Peter, for building three, in order to retain a little from the ceremonies of Moses, as the passover (which they dignify with the name

name of the Lord's supper) and a little from John (here seen as Elias, in whose life, power, and spirit, John came) to wit, water baptism. So Peter, ignorantly thinking it good to remain where all three might have place together, proposeth, or asks liberty, as followeth: "let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias; for he wist not what to say," Mark ix. 2. 7. In very deed, he wist not, or, according to Luke's account, knew not, what he said: knew not that this proposal struck directly against the simplicity of the gospel, and was contrary to the life and design of the transfiguration.

HE was for buildings which belong not to the gospel day; tabernacles for those whose dispensations were but preparatory to that which is purely of Jesus: for there was a cloud that over-shadowed them. Oh! that it may be seen, and daily considered, how exactly this is the case now, with those who still think it good to remain under the shadows. Is not the cloud still over them? The signs under Moses and John (here Elias) pointed men to Christ; but the full dispensation of Jesus, is nothing short of God and man in heavenly union. As then in him, so now, in all the seed, all his true disciples, there is a real joining and uniting of the life of man in and with the life of God in the soul. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," Cor. vi. 17.

THIS is livingly taught in the Christ of God, being truly both the Son of God and the Son of Man. Here all preceding dispensations end; the signs are superseded; Christ becomes our one life in the heavenly fellowship, and, as Paul says, "I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. Here we enjoy the true riches and glory of his inheritance in the saints, which is Christ in us in the hope of glory. See Eph. i. 18. Col. i. 27.—What can all the shadows of the good things to come do for those who possess and enjoy the good things themselves, are led unto, live and act in

the life and substance pointed at by all the types and figures of old? Did Christians know and enjoy this mystery in its true fulness and glory, all old things would be done away; for here all things become new; all things of God; here we are complete in Jesus, in whom the fulness dwells; and have no need at all of signs to perfect us in our Christian duty: no need of outward washing, being washed in his blood, inwardly sprinkled, to the cleansing of the heart: no need of outward circumcision—our circumcision and baptism are in Christ—into death with him, putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: no need of eating bread and drinking wine, in remembrance of him, seeing he has become our life; we enjoy his soul-satiating, his all-consolating presence—he sups with us, and we with him—eating the bread of life, and drinking the new wine of salvation with us in the heavenly kingdom of his Father, inwardly and spiritually—where all types cease for ever—where the faith which is the very substance of things hoped for, the new creature in this union of God and man, is all in all.—Here every thought is “brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” 2 Cor. x. 5. No mere outward observations can add any thing useful to this state; and this is the reason why they must and do here cease. The reason why they were once used was, that men were too much alienated from the life and substance—they were used as outward pointers to the inward life.—When the resurrection of Christ, the life is fully known in us, all mere signs are, and in the very nature of things, must be, entirely superseded. Till then, we may be in a state of mixture, as many are with their three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for John, and one for Moses. Hence the figurative dispensation was not altogether abolished outwardly, till Christ’s outward resurrection; this being generally the case in the inward. Those who have not known this pretty fully in themselves, are mostly some way or other relying more or less on outward things; but they whose life is full and truly in him, who is the resurrection and the life, are got beyond

yond all improper reliance on any thing but the life of Jesus in them—this is the plain reason why the anti-typical baptism, which now saves us, is by the resurrection of Christ—not by washing in water to put away the filth of the flesh—for though some of the translators use the word figure in a text which speaks plainly of this spiritual baptism, it is not so in the Greek. The original word, as already noted, is antitypon : so that the saving baptism, there spoken of, and which is by the resurrection and life of Christ, is not a figure, but the very antitype itself.—Had Peter known this at the time of the transfiguration, as well as he did when he wrote his epistles, it is in no wise probable that he would have thought the building of tabernacles, for the retention of signs and shadows, a gospel labour : but seeing Peter was as yet so far from a clear understanding of the nature and pure spirituality of the gospel, as to propose three tabernacles even then, just when Christ was specially opening the dismissal of all but one, that is “ the tabernacle of God, that “ is with men,” Rev. xxi. 3 ; let none marvel that this same Peter afterwards commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized in water, a thing in no wise strange for him to do, even though it had not been done merely in condescension, as there is much reason to believe it was. He remained for some time too outward and limited in his ideas ; he did not know that the gospel was an universal thing, extending to Gentiles as well as Jews—so that a wonderful vision was vouchsafed, to remove his scruples, and induce his visit to Cornelius—and when there, God gave him words suitable to the occasion, and which being delivered in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with divine power, were eminently instrumental to their baptism with the Holy Ghost who heard him, even in such a remarkable manner, that at his first utterance, as he began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them.

THIS at once struck Peter, as being an exact and gracious performance of the promissory word of the

Lord Jesus—"John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." See Acts xi. 15, 16. For this baptism was now so evidently dispensed through Peter's preaching, that he immediately remembered this precious promise of our blessed Lord—which had been very illy applied by him to the Holy Ghost falling on them, had that not been strictly the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as intended by the promise—nor indeed can any, who clearly know this baptism, think strange of Peter's recollecting this promise, and applying it to what took place at this memorable season; nor is there any doubt with me but that the Holy Ghost brought it to his remembrance, and shewed him it was now actually performed through himself as an instrument; for God had truly and eminently enabled him to execute, in a very exact and striking manner, the great commission of our Lord, Mat. xxviii. 19. which was to teach, baptizing; not teach, and then baptize, as two separate acts; but by teaching in the power and efficacy received from on high, they were to baptize them in the very name, that is the life and power, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—And into this name, life and power, Peter did baptize them: they received it as he spake unto them, which exactly answered the commission, "teach, baptizing."

No marvel, then, that he immediately remembered Christ's promise, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,"—seeing the baptismal influences thereof, attending upon his powerful preaching, were so livingly in fulfilment thereof.—Nevertheless, as water had been in great estimation, it seems Peter thought best to condescend to the weakness of those young converts, and of his Jewish brethren then present, as his Lord and Master had again and again graciously condescended to him in his weakness.—So he commanded them to be baptized; and perhaps he could not have done better in their weak state, and especially as none appeared to forbid it, which it is probable he might not know

know but some then present might have authority to do; for his mind began now to be considerably enlarged; he clearly perceived (which he seems not to have known before) that God was no respecter of persons, of Jew more than Gentile, &c. Indeed the very query, "can any man forbid water?" &c. Acts x. 47, is an appeal to men, and bespeaks a state of hesitation, or uncertainty. Nor is his hesitancy at all to be admired at, things having so wonderfully altered in his view in a short time past; and the anointing of truth, that brings all things to remembrance, having just now revived in his mind the sweet and precious promise of his dear Redeemer—"John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," which he could not but see and know, was then, through him, graciously taking place upon these Gentiles; it is by no means strange that he doubted the propriety of baptizing them in water. It had been much stranger, had he not doubted it, especially as water was the very thing which our Lord, in the words now brought to Peter's remembrance, had pointedly opposed to his own baptism; that, as a thing which had been; his own, as what should be: Peter therefore plainly seeing the latter, might well doubt the further use of the former, especially among Gentiles, seeing its very design was that Christ might be manifest to Israel.

CORNELIUS and his family were not of Israel; and if they had been, why continue the sign in presence of the substance, unless in condescension to the weakness that could not readily relinquish it? It is evident enough that Peter did not think it indispensable, or he would scarcely have put the question at all.—There is very little room in propriety to ask another whether that can be forbidden, which we know ourselves we are indispensably enjoined and commanded.—Water baptism was not at that time in force; yet Peter might rationally doubt whether it would give satisfaction to omit it, and so might cautiously put the question, to feel out their minds; not really knowing but that
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some one present might so livingly open its abolition, and so satisfyingly declare its non-essentiality, that all the rest would have been perfectly satisfied with the omission of it.—But none doing this, and it being a new case, Peter it seems, desirous of getting through safely, and without hurting any tender mind, and knowing that his now commanding it done need not perpetuate it (nor does it, any more than James, directing to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, perpetuates that) but that after mature consideration, and when the state of things would bear it, it might be quite laid aside, did on this occasion command it to be done ; and it might really be safest and best, at that time, so to do ; nor was this and the anointing with oil the only ceremonies that were still at times condescendingly used, some time after the abrogation of signs and figures, as to any further obligation.

A WELL-TIMED condescension to the weakness of others is an excellent thing—but let none now delight to dwell in the weakness, and therein weakly consider the condescension exercised at a time, wherein it was evidently a very nice and difficult point to know how to proceed so as to hurt no one, either Jew or Greek ; as establishing an ordinance of perpetual obligation under the gospel, that dispensation of life and substance pointed to, by such outward observation. For so far is that condescension from affording any just pretence for such a conclusion, that we have great reason to believe that even Peter himself, soon after this, became quite clear to omit water baptism entirely, as a figurative thing, not belonging to the gospel ; for we do not find he afterwards once used or ordered it to be administered to any ; but on the contrary, we do find he describes the baptism that now saves us as quite another thing, and as being effected by the resurrection of Christ the life, to the answer of a good conscience. And indeed it must be so ; for the gospel of Christ is, and in its own pure nature must be, void of any mere outward and figurative observations—and to hold it forth so, in
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its genuine purity, and stripped of all these signs of both John and Moses:—we find there was a voice heard out of the cloud, just after Peter's proposal to build three tabernacles, at the time of the transfiguration, Matt. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix. 28, &c. saying, "this is my beloved Son, hear him," 35. A very timely admonition indeed, and sufficient, one might suppose, to prevent all who understand it from wishing to build three tabernacles, or to retain any of the mere shadows of either Moses or John, as circumcision, the passover, or water baptism, now, since they are all ended, and Christ is to be heard in all things.

WHILST the cloud overshadowed them, they were for three tabernacles (they knew not that Moses and John must not be retained) but when the divine voice brake through the cloud, they had their attention called singly to Jesus. But further, that no confirmation should be wanting, and as it were in order to set it home, and seal it for ever, that this was the true intent and meaning of this glorious vision, and of the voice from the excellent glory, we find that immediately upon their hearing said voice, even "suddenly when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only, with themselves."

HERE is the genuine simplicity of Christ's spiritual kingdom and gospel beautifully and instructively displayed.—Here those things that were of a nature, and in design, to be shaken, fulfilled, and done away, are removed; and that only which cannot be shaken remains. This is shaking not the earth only, but also heaven; not sin, and carnality, and earthly-mindedness alone; but here a great part of many people's religion, and what they think belongs to the very kingdom of heaven, and gospel of Jesus, are shaken and removed out of the way; yea, things once of God himself ordained, as striking shadows of the good things to come, but ever by him designed to vanish, in the full presence and enjoyment of the good things themselves. Blessed are they

they who "have ears to hear," and hearts to understand, and faith to follow the Lamb of God wheresoever he leadeth, even to the loss of all their own buildings, their own righteousness, and creaturely performances, till they come to cease from their own works as God did from his.—These shall be established as Mount Sion, that shall never be removed; and being preserved from subjection to, or from touching, tasting, or handling, those outward ordinances, which consist in things that perish with the using, shall know the Lord to be one, and his name one; and living and serving the one Lord, in the life, love and victory of the saints' one true faith, shall know assuredly that there is but one true gospel baptism, "not putting away the filth of the flesh (or outward body, which is the work of outward washing) but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."—For these shall know him to be "the resurrection and the life" to and in their own souls: Christ in them the hope of glory, and shall have no hope or confidence in any outward sprinklings or dippings, eatings or drinkings, as pertaining to the work of salvation.

THE substantial "answer of a good conscience" is not known without the resurrection of Christ in the soul; but this known in fulness ever makes "perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;" which yet cannot be experienced but through the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. "For though the baptism that saves, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh," that is, the outward filth of the body; yet it ever does put away the sinful filth of the fleshly mind; this is the very work and design of it. Hence its administrator has his fan in his hand, to winnow the chaff from the wheat; his soap, like the fuller, to wash and cleanse away the filth; and his fire, like the refiner, to separate the dross from the gold; yea, purely to purge away all the dross, tin, and even reprobate silver, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire; thus cleansing, and that thoroughly, the very floor of the heart.—This is the baptism that saves, the work of him who
saves

saves "his people from their sins," not in them. It is therefore altogether beside the true meaning of Peter's words, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," to suppose he meant that the saving baptism he there spake of does not cleanse from sin, or put away our sinful filth; but that it is an outward ordinance, which must be submitted to, just to answer a good conscience in that particular respect, without any reliance upon it as to sanctification from sin; which construction I have often known it glossed with, by the pleaders for elementary baptism.

BUT is it not strange, that men of sense should consent to believe, that the baptism which now saveth us, doth not save us from sin, doth not put away the sinful filth of the flesh? If Peter spake truth when he said "baptism doth also now save us," he must speak of the one saving baptism. There never was but one thing that could save: "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Where this is livingly witnessed, "the resurrection and the life" of Christ is always known, and therein "the answer of a good conscience towards God" takes place, to a degree of unspeakable enjoyment; a fulness of divine consolation, unknown in the performance of mere outward ordinances, and never attained to but by being planted in the likeness of Christ's death, buried with him by true Christian baptism into the death of sin, and this death, by the power of the eternal Spirit, arising with him in the power of his resurrection, and walking with him in newness of life.

BUT to return; as those outward things which had been "imposed until the time of reformation," and were here exhibited, in the transfiguration, as not belonging to the gospel, were not absolutely and entirely out of date till Christ had risen: he so far condescended to their continuance, that he did not forbid and prevent his disciples baptizing his followers in
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water; for this was a performance at that time in very great vogue, and Christ well knew how to deal with a people habituated to outward observances. It had all along, under the law and prophets, been found extremely difficult to restrain that people from the idolatries of the heathen, even though God had so far accommodated himself or his law to their outward state and disposition, as to provide them with many signs and ceremonies, "divers washings," a worldly sanctuary, &c. Heb. ix. 1.

THE mind of man once turned to religious exercises, and pressing on therein, is hard to be properly restrained, is very prone to imagery, idolatry, and a great deal of outward show and activity. And from this ground sprang all pagan idolatry; all advances toward it among the Jews; all continuations of Jewish, heathenish, or other mere outward signs and shadows among Christians, and many absurd and foolish observations among Turks and Mahometans. Christ knew what was in man, and needed none "to testify" unto him "of man," as appears by John ii. 25. And as he had many things to say unto his disciples, which they could not at first bear (see John xvi. 12) he advanced them gradually, condescending to their weakness, and attachment to things that belong not to, and can have no place in, the pure spirituality of his kingdom. This amply accounts for his disciples continuing to baptize many new disciples, as they came to believe on him, and follow him, even after he and John had in great degree fulfilled that dispensation; a dispensation which probably had never been necessary, but for the dark and untoward state of the peoples' minds. And had they all, when Christ came, turned their attention rightly to him, and fully understood the inward and spiritual nature of his gospel, there would have been very little, if any, real use for baptism in water afterwards.

A dispensation of signs was ever in condescension to man's weakness; and once indulged, they are apt to obtain

obtain too great veneration, and be too long retained; for it is seldom, if ever, the case, that things highly esteemed, can be dropt all at once suddenly.—It is often safer, and better, to lead people along gradually from signs to substance, as they can bear it. Therefore the early followers of the blessed Jesus were tenderly indulged, and all outward things were not at once rent from them; for though he plainly taught (Luke xvii. 20) that the “kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” or as in the margin, “with outward show,” yet during the twilight of things, or the evening time, wherein, though there was some light, yet there was also some darkness; things not being yet wholly clear, nor wholly dark; not yet full and perfect gospel day, nor altogether night. See Zachar. xiv. 6, 7. He might safely, and he did wisely, permit things not properly belonging to his kingdom, but which were to decrease, and terminate as the sun arose, and the day advanced in its full clearness and perfection. And these things, though then only permitted in condescension, too many very sincere, but in this respect weak Christians, have been gleaning up, from that day to this, instead of pressing into the spiritual holy of holies, beyond all yails, signs and symbols.

THEY puzzle themselves with the Apostles condescending practices, and would erect these into gospel ordinances, though neither Christ nor any of his Apostles ever enjoined their observance as such. Indeed they were so far beneath the spirituality and pure simplicity of the new covenant, which was and is in the heart and inward parts, that the great Mediator thereof never condescended, that we have any account of, to baptize one person with water; it is on the contrary expressly declared, that “Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.” Oh! he well knew why he omitted it; for had he done it, it might have induced his most enlightened followers to continue it, out of veneration to his example; as many now do from that of his disciples, though he himself never once practised nor com-

manded it ; and though Paul thanked God he had baptized so very few. See 1 Cor. i. 14.

As to its permission during the time after it was in a good degree fulfilled, till Christ arose from the dead, it might very well be suffered in condescension ; for the gospel day and dispensation had not then fully come in : all that space was a time of unfulfilling : many things of an outward typical nature, were during that time fulfilled, and very especially that of the passover, which Christ desired with great desire to eat with his disciples before he suffered. See Luke xxii. 15. But why was he so earnest to do it before he suffered ?—The reason of this his earnest desire is plain to him “ who has ears to hear,” to others it may be a mystery. Christ could never do it with propriety, unless before he suffered ; and had he not done it, it would have remained unfulfilled, as to his actual fulfilment, by that special participation of it. It belonged only to the law ; it vanished with Moses, as water baptism did with Elias, that is John ; hence it behoved Christ, in order to its fulfilment, to eat it before he suffered ; while things were fulfilling ; whilst the outward and typical things concerning him were having their end (see verse 37 of this same chapter) that so having done away all these things, he might triumph over them, nailing them to his cross (see Col. ii. 14.) and be able on the cross to say as he did, “ it is finished,” John xix. 30 ; which he could not have said with equal propriety, had so important a type as the passover remained unabolished by him ; and yet many are ignorantly celebrating the passover very frequently, under an idea that Christ, at the very time when he ended it, instituted an outward supper of perpetual continuance in his church, which could not possibly be, consistently with the nature of his kingdom, which is an inward thing ; and therefore, when he sent his disciples to prepare for him to eat the passover, he bid them say, “ my time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples,” Mat. xxvi. 18. He knew the
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the time was at hand for all these things to be abolished, and have an end, Luke xxii. 37. He steadily calls it the passover, and never, I think, once by any other name: and having eaten it with his disciples, and turned their attention to its mystical signification, to the necessity of their eating his spiritual flesh, and drinking his spiritual blood, which, that he might take occasion to do, that they might live by him, was doubtless one great cause of his anxious desire to eat it with them, and just reminded them, in eating the mere figure, to do it in remembrance of him; he then, as if purposely to shew them it belonged not to the gospel, wound up the ceremony, telling them he would not any more eat or drink these outward symbols, nor partake again with them of the passover, till he drank the wine new with them in the kingdom of heaven (see Mat. xxvi. 29.) or until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God, Luke xxii. 16; or, as expressed verse 18, "until the kingdom of God shall come." This new wine he drank with them eminently in that holy and spiritual kingdom, which they lived to see come before they tasted of death, according to his promise, on the day of Pentecost and other blessed seasons—continues to drink it new in the same glorious kingdom with all that open and let him come in, for he sups with them, and they with him; and this is the only true celebration of the Lord's supper—that which is outward is not (and cannot be) to eat the Lord's supper; for that is spiritual; no such sign and symbols can now have any proper place in Christ's kingdom—but as he is substantially and experimentally in and with his people to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20; as he does not leave them comfortless, but cometh unto them, John xiv. 18; as he and his Father make their real and living abode with them (see verse 23) so he eats and drinks with them in his invisible kingdom, where they "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," which can be only in that kingdom. There they sit under their own vine and fig-tree, where none can make them afraid; see Mic. iv. 4. These eat the flesh

and drink the blood of the Son of God, whereby their souls are made alive.

“WHAT is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord,” Jer. xxiii. 28. What is a little bit of outward bread, and a cup of wine, at best taken by way of remembrance, to the real supper of the Lord, which all the saints partake of, and live by? and what if Christ did tell his disciples, as they then ate the outward sign, to do it in remembrance of him, Luke xxii. 19; and what if Paul told them, as often as they did so, they shewed the Lord’s death till he came,” 1 Cor. xi. 26: surely that makes no institution of perpetual outward ordinance in the church of Christ. It was a matter of liberty and choice, whether after that once they ate it or not; and that but until the Lord came, according to his promise that he would not leave them comfortless, but would come unto them. And surely they greatly miss the true end and design of it, who are still in these days eating and drinking the outward figure, not discerning the Lord’s spiritual body, nor partaking of that divine flesh and blood that gives life, nourishment and vigour to the soul: for if this was their happy experience and enjoyment, in the presence, company, and kingdom of the Lord, with true, living, and sensible discernment of his body, and that spiritually broken for them, and of his spiritual blood, livingly and life-givingly shed for them; why should they be still eating and drinking the old, long-ceased symbols of it, in remembrance of a present Lord and Saviour? Does not this practice bespeak Christ’s real absence to their souls, or their non-discernment of his spiritual body? Let the wise in heart among them ponder it well.

BUT now to return to water baptism: I was mentioning that it might be continued till Christ’s resurrection, with some kind of indulgent propriety—and accordingly we find, that as they came down from the mountain (after the transfiguration) he (Christ) charged them

them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead, Mark ix. 9. The vision looked forward to that time, for the full completion of the things it was designed to exhibit—and therefore this very silence enjoined on them till that time, is a further and loud confirmation that the foregoing is the genuine import and meaning of the whole vision; but further they asked him, saying, “why say the scribes that Elias must first come?” verse 11. And he answered and told them, “Elias verily first cometh, and restoreth all things,” verse 12: “but I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come,” verse 13, or, as Matthew has it, chap. xvii. ver. 12, 13, “but I say unto you, that Elias has come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them”—then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist; thus clear it is that John the Baptist was Elias, who had thus appeared and disappeared in the mount with them: on the whole, it is evident to thoroughly enlightened minds as any doctrine in the gospel, that neither water baptism, eating material bread and wine, nor any other mere outward performance, can possibly in the nature of things have any place as standing ordinances in the church and kingdom of Christ. Christ’s coming was designed to put an end to all these things—and therefore the eating, drinking, washing and purification, which remain in the gospel state, are all inward and spiritual, and can be no otherwise. The one gospel baptism is not that which puts away the outward filth of the flesh (which is all that water can do) but it is that which actually saves us, and brings to “the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. iii. 21.—This no figure could or ever can do, though such as continue under the signs of former dispensations would have us believe, that the Apostle here affirms that a figure saves us, by the resurrection of Christ; whereas there never was and

never can be but one thing that saves the soul, and that is the inward purifying baptism of the Holy Ghost, as Titus iii. 5, "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Here is something that changes, regenerates and renews the soul; well may this be said to be saving: and as this "washing of water by the word" spiritually saves the soul, how natural is Peter's comparison of an outward salvation, in an outward ark, on the outward water, to this inward salvation, by inward and spiritual water, in the inward and spiritual ark of the everlasting covenant. See Rev. xi. 19. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament," &c. If Christians would wait to see the temple of God thus spiritually opened in heaven, they would come to know this ark, and would rejoice in the salvation therein experienced; and would know it to be as impossible for one sign or figure to save the soul as another; that outward water can no more be sanctified to the washing away sin, than the "blood of bulls and of goats," which the Apostle says plainly is impossible, Heb. x. 4, "for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," and it will for ever remain as impossible for outward washing to do it—and therefore Peter wisely adds, after mentioning the baptism that now saves us, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh;" for he had now learned, whatever he had when he visited Cornelius, and it is likely he pretty well knew it then, that outward water could not wash away sin, nor "make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience," any more than the other signs and divers washings under the law; and therefore having mentioned outward water in the preceding verse, lest any should ignorantly suppose he meant outward water, in speaking of the baptism which now saves us, he carefully and immediately distinguishes, and declares he did not mean any outward cleansing, but something which really doth save; and he asserts it to be "by the

the resurrection of Jesus Christ," as that which livingly known in us, "the resurrection and the life," brings to the comfortable answer of a good conscience; and nothing else ever can, for "the law made nothing perfect" as pertaining to the conscience; for, it having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect; for then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 1. 2.

HERE we see those outward sacrifices and washings, "the shadows of good things to come," could never purge the conscience then; nor can any outward baptisms, nor all the waters of Jordan, any more do it now; and therefore, Peter, speaking of the baptism which now saves us, brings it home to that which alone can truly purge the conscience, and "make the comers thereunto perfect;" to wit, the bringing in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 19. Here we "lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope" (says the Apostle) "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil," chap. vi. 18, 19. This is "Christ in us the hope of glory." See Col. i. 27. This is known only where Christ is "the resurrection and the life" experimentally to the soul, as before observed. Here alone is the answer of a good conscience; hereby indeed "we draw nigh unto God," and this is all within, and is the experience of such only whose understandings are so enlightened, as to "know what is the hope of this calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," Eph. i. 18.

CHAP. III.

All old things done away in the gospel state. Signs and shadows ceased. Their use was from men's alienation from Christ; the law being added because of transgression. Christ in men, the life of all dispensations. All change in these, but in accommodation to the change in men. Shadows but imposed until the time of reformation.—The way into the boliest of all not manifest, whilst the first tabernacle was standing, and the mind resting in outward ordinances. Water baptism was under the first covenant, and no part of the second. Hence the least, purely under the second, is greater than John, as John the Baptist. As Moses gave place to Joshua, so John to Jesus. Moses entered not into Canaan; nor John, as the Baptist, into the purely spiritual kingdom. Signs and figures make none perfect. Hence there is a disannulling of all these for their weakness. It is idle to suppose one set of ceremonials abolished to make way for others as gospel ordinances. Christ commissionates his disciples, at Galilee, to baptize into the very name, the life and power of God; not as a separate act, but by their powerful gospel ministry. They were to teach baptizingly.

AS I have long seen, with sorrow, how the shadows detain people from the substance, and how hard many strive, even against lively convictions to the contrary, at times, and greatly to their own loss, in regard to the true riches, glory and inheritance of and in the saints, to make these outward things answer, as a substitute, instead of inward substance; I am in earnest to assist them, if possible, in the necessary discovery that these things have long ago ceased, as to their proper use; and can have no proper place in the full sunshine of the gospel day. Bear with me, therefore, friendly reader, whilst I further show how "all old things" (signs and ceremonies) "are passed away" to all thorough Christians, "all things are" (to these) "become new; all things are of God," 2 Cor. xvii. 18.

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Now it is clear to me, "all old things" are not passed away in the experience of any who are continuing in the religious use of outward bread, wine, water, or any of the old figurative things of the former dispensations. The law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, Gal. iii. 19. If man had not transgressed against the light of Christ, shining in the heart, and enlightening "every man that cometh into the world" (John i.) I suppose no outward written law had ever been necessary. Were not the minds of men alienated from the life and government of Christ in the soul, where the kingdom of heaven is (for Christ declares it is within) none of the signs, either of John's or the Mosaic dispensation, had ever been found needful. These were only as a schoolmaster, to lead the mind back from its wanderings "to Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" the change is only in us, and all the change of dispensations, from first to last, is in accommodation and condescension to the changing and changed state of men. Christ was "before Abraham," and was and is all the real life, in and under every dispensation; and those outward things were only "imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. ix. 10.) until a return to that from which the mind was estranged, for in that estranged, bewildered and outward literal state of mind, the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest;" for the first, the outward "tabernacle, was yet standing," verse 8; and the mind in this state was still disposed to stop and rest in the outward tabernacle, and in the shadow of the first covenant, "which had many ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." See verse 1. Here the outward worshippers rested secure, although this tabernacle was but "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only (let it be duly noticed) in meats, and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed on them, until

until the time of reformation," verse 10. But none of these things belong to the gospel, or times of real reformation, and full return to the life and substance, which was of old, before ever the outward law was written, amply sufficient for all that would keep to it. But men departing from this, and rebelling against the light, they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof, Job xxiv. 13. And in this alienated and rebellious state "the law entered, that the offence might abound," Rom. v. 23; for God, in gracious condescension to man thus darkened, and wandering from the sure guide, was pleased to meet him in things more outward, to arrest his attention, and make him sensible of the offensiveness of his state and condition; that so, if it might by any means be effected, he might turn to the Lord, and find him a Saviour.—Hence the law entered with many very significant ceremonies and services, pointing out man's need of purification, forgiveness, and restoration. All this was to serve as a "schoolmaster to lead to Christ." It is not only pointed to him as then yet to come a great way off, or a long time hence; but it pointed to him also directly, as then at hand, in and among them, if they would have known and attended to him. For, says Moses (Deut. xxx. 11, &c.) "this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? but the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it." And verse 20, he presseth it upon them to love and cleave unto the Lord, assuring them thus; "for he is thy life, and the length of thy days."

THUS did Moses point out the word near and in them, and referred them plainly to the Lord himself, as the life to their souls. And Paul tells the Romans,

x. 8,

x. 8, that this word which Moses tells Israel was near and in them, "is the word of faith, which we preach." And in the preceding verses expressly declares this to be the "righteousness of faith;" and that it speaketh on this wise, "say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead,)" &c. Hence it is clear, that the life of Christ the Lord near them and even in them, was what Moses meant to point them to, and wish them to love and cleave unto, and which was nothing less than the true and living word of faith which the Apostles preached. This, as before hinted, has been the real life of all dispensations; and when and where the true reformation, return, and cleaving unto this, hearing and doing it, take place in purity and fulness, "all old things are passed away."—The shadows vanish before the light, and the elements melt with the fervent heat of the gospel sun.

THESE things could never have been designed for perpetual continuance in the gospel state, but only to lead unto it. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second," Heb. viii. 7. John's baptism, as well as the passover, was under the first covenant, and no proper part of the second. Had it been part of the second, how could Christ have testified, as before noticed, that though among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he? Mat. xi. 11: but the reason is now plain, as already evinced, why the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, to wit, that both he, as John the Baptist, and his baptism, belonged not to the second covenant; and that, therefore, as John the Baptist, he was but the administrator of a baptism that has no proper place in Christ's spiritual kingdom, to the least, in the purity of which, "all old things are passed away." This state is evidently greater,

as has been observed already, than that of John, as the baptizer in outward water, in which capacity he is here spoken of; and as such he was to decrease, and his baptism to give place to Christ's.

As a faint and servant of God, he was never to decrease, but to "increase with the increase of God;" but his dispensation, his baptism, was ever designed to decrease, and be fulfilled. And I think it will be granted, that the least in the pure kingdom of life and substance is, and must be, in the nature of things, greater than any ever could be in the mere administration of a decreasing and terminating institution.

JOHN was doubtless, as a Christian (and such there have been in all ages, Abraham was eminently one) great in the kingdom of heaven, but this was not as John the Baptist; as such, he came to, but did not enter, the kingdom, nor belong to it; he saw it with his eyes, and knew, and pointed to the Lord of it; but as Moses went not over Jordan, though he did much towards leading Israel to their inheritance, but gave place to Joshua, whose name, like that of Jesus, signifies a Saviour, and who conducted them after Moses into the good land; so John the Baptist, as such, could not belong to the purely spiritual kingdom of our Lord; but gave place to him, the anointed Saviour, who baptizeth every member and subject of his church and kingdom, into the very life and power of the kingdom, which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. And seeing John's baptism was no part of the second covenant, but was under the first, and its proper use was only whilst the first tabernacle was standing, it is equally disannulled by the abolishing of the first covenant, and removal of the first tabernacle, with the other figurative observations; and for the same reason was this disannulled, as were the others, viz. its insufficiency, weakness, and utter inability to make perfect, the comers thereunto. - "For there is verily

verily a disannulling of the commandment, going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb. vii. 18, 19. Here we see that which went before the new covenant state was, for its weakness and unprofitableness of making perfect, disannulled; and surely John's ministration and baptism went before that state, and were designed expressly to prepare for it. I marvel that Christians do not see it, and press on beyond it. It is idle to suppose that one set of signs and ceremonies disannulled for their weakness, and another set introduced as perpetual ordinances in the gospel state, we do not read, that, "finding fault" with the rites, figures, and ordinances of the first covenant, God ordained water-washing, and eating and drinking bread and wine, as more permanent and perpetual institutions of the new or second covenant. Nay, verily, he finds fault equally with all things in their own nature equally partaking of the same weakness; both were of divine institution for a time, and equally weak and liable to a necessary abrogation; and being both typical, there were no more perpetual permanency in the one than the other; neither in themselves, nor in their institution; and of the Mosaic institutions, it is expressly said, finding fault with them, he saith, "behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah," Heb. viii. 8. Now what was this new covenant? It was intended to supercede and supply the defects of the old; but there is not one word of any of those outward ordinances in it.—They are all old things; and however extolled by many good men, belong to the old covenant forever. So that the ceremonials of the law are as much gospel ordinances as water baptism, or bread and wine.

THE new covenant is altogether inward and spiritual. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in
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their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," &c. verse 10. "Christ has not entered into the holy places, made with hands, which are the figures of the true," Heb. ix. 24. Nor ought we, if we would become compleatly his followers, to continue in the figurative washings, any more than in the figurative offerings and old ceremonious worship of that temple, which was but a figure of the true.—"The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law," vii. 12. It behoved that the baptisms accompanying the first priesthood, the worldly tabernacle, and holy places made with hands, should, like them, be outward: but now, the law being changed, and the covenant written in the heart, a spiritual baptism alone can be proper, and accordingly is the one only baptism of the gospel, for if it was necessary "that the patterns of the heavenly things," these being outward, should be figuratively purified with outward sprinklings, washings, &c. surely it is as necessary that the heavenly things themselves be purified with better sacrifices and washings than these." See Heb. ix. 23. I think if the vail were done away in the experience of Christians, they might in this one text, Heb. x. 5, "when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me," read clearly the dismissal of all figurative atonements and purifications; all the sacrifices and offerings "he taketh away"—as the first things, "that he may establish the second"—that is, "lo I come to do thy will, O God." This must be done in all the seed; and this is the thing that remaineth forever, established under the gospel.—The scope of the Apostle's reasoning in this chapter, against the continuation of the "shadows of the good things to come," is from their weakness, their impropriety and uselessness, where the substance is known, and thus he argues, that where remission of sins is obtained, there is no more offering for sin. See verse 18. Why then continue a baptism that was expressly unto repentance, for the remission of sins, if we have obtained remission?

mission? Paul brings in the new covenant written in the heart, and the remission of sins, attending it. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and in the very next words forms the above conclusion. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.—And after he gets through with the argument, instead of urging any outward baptisms, or figurative observations, he pressing-ly enjoins love, good works, holding fast, not drawing back, not neglecting assembling, not to cast away confidence, patience, &c.—Can any thing be plainer, than that such care and constancy in faith, patience, and godly walking, according to the writing of the new covenant, are the weighty matters of the gospel dispensation in Paul's estimation? that as he was not sent to baptize with water, so he never in all his writing enjoins it, nor reprove for its omission; he speaks of the believers, not as being then exercised in the terrible things, at Sinai, but as come to the excellent things of Mount Sion, "the heavenly Jerusalem, to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; to the blood of sprinkling," &c. This is all sufficient without the figures—and so he shows the removal of all else, "yet once more I shake not the earth only; but also heaven"—this is the removal of things that are shaken—"that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." "Wherefore" (says he) "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." See about the latter half of chapter xii. and xiii. 9. He subjoins, "be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."—Did he not mean these elementary things, by the strange doctrines? if not, why does he so immediately propose grace as the means of establishment, and discountenance meats as unprofitable? and what means the

altar in the next verse, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle? is not this altar and that which is eaten, by the we, who have it, and have a right to eat of it, something belonging to the kingdom they have received which cannot be shaken? and are not the meats, drinkings and washings, that are unprofitable, the things that are shaken? and why is the shaking and removal of these, called shaking heaven? is it not plainly because these are things that had pertained to devotion and religious services, and were yet urged as such by too many? and can any thing remain of a ceremonial nature, where this heaven is thoroughly shaken, where all old things are done away, and all things become new, according to the new and living way of the gospel?—This epistle is supposed to have been written in the year sixty-four; so that there had been a pretty full time of trial what was and what was not profitable to those who had been occupied in them; and we find here many good things inculcated and enjoined; but ceremonials are rejected, as pertaining to the first covenant, and as now shaken and removed; and is it not truly worthy of remark, that John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, who is supposed to have written his history of Christ's life and doctrines many years after his ascension, makes no mention at all of our Saviour's conduct at the eating of the passover, in regard to the disciples eating and drinking in remembrance of him—but relates very circumstantially his other conduct of washing the disciples feet, and the instructive lesson couched in it?

MAY we not fairly conclude, that as the only proper time of the disciples eating and drinking in remembrance of Christ, was but until his coming again, the Comforter to take up his abode with them, and lead and guide them into all truth; and as this season was long elapsed, when John wrote, that therefore, he thinking it of no use to mention it, passed it in total silence, as one of the many things which Jesus truly did, but which are not noticed in his history? We find him

him very careful in correcting a hearsay report, which might, if believed, tend to lead people into outward observances, which he appears not to have relied on, nor inculcated in all his writings. The report I allude to is that, by the spreading whereof "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John" the Baptist. This mistake the beloved disciple, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and having near access to his heart, knew much of his mind and will, takes special care to rectify, by a full declaration that "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." Observing this general omission of things not essential, and his great care to transmit down to posterity many heavenly and truly evangelical and deeply interesting sayings, exhortations and divine intimations of the blessed Jesus; I have been ready to suppose his whole aim, in mentioning water baptism at all, was just to do John the Baptist and the Pharisees justice; properly introduce Jesus as increasing, and John as decreasing; carefully record John's repeated mention of water, as peculiar to his baptism, in direct contradistinction to Christ's; and pointedly to contradict the mistaken opinion, that Christ baptized in water.

JOHN knew very well the disciples did so, and doubtless knew on what ground it was. Let any one read carefully his evangelical history and epistles, and observe his almost total silence about many things related by others, and how he abounds in the mention of deep spiritual matters; and see if it does not greatly favour the opinion, that John saw the abundant need of preserving and inculcating things of an inward, living, spiritual import and concernment, and divine nature: he aimed at life and substance, and carefully retained what is most livingly expressive of it, and what tends most immediately to promote the knowledge of it among men. In his epistles he dwells almost entirely on things really essential: he makes the old commandment, the word they had "heard from the beginning"—and the new, "which thing" (says he) "is true in

him and in you," to centre in the doctrine of the true light that now shineth, 1 John ii. 7, 8. And his advices are to faithfulness in keeping and abiding in the holy word, to love and good works; but not a word of exhortation to ceremonials.—And may we not fairly conclude, both water baptism, and the bread and wine, were much laid aside, or very little relied upon or inculcated, at the late period at which this beloved disciple wrote?



CHAP. IV.

Christ's baptism is into the name, i. e. life and power of the Godhead. So his commission to his disciples to administer it, could not be executed but by divine power. They waiting for, received this and baptized others with it. All gospel preaching is herein, and in its nature is baptizing. Christ's baptism effects entire sanctification. John's a lively type of it, being all over in water. It shewed the need of cleansing and remission, but effected neither. Christ's alone can. John constantly distinguishes his from Christ's, by the word water. Christ baptized none in water, nor ordered it (that appears) but doubtless would, had it been his baptism. None of the prophecies point him out so baptizing, but as effecting inward changes. Disciples use of water no more perpetuates it, than their use of circumcision, anointing with oil, vows, &c. do them. Paul's commission full, yet he thanks God he baptized so few. Council at Jerusalem did not advise water, bread or wine.

LET us now attend more particularly to the great baptismal commission, Mat. 28. The 18th verse introduceth it thus: "and Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." A very proper introduction to command attention, inspire confidence, and shew them whence their

their whole qualification to teach baptizingly was to proceed. 19th, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them *eis to onoma*, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." 20th, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Observe he says, "go ye therefore ;" that is, because "I have all power," and can and will qualify you so to teach, in my own life and power, as hereby to baptize the people into the very name, the power, virtue and life, of the Divinity. Observe further, the commission is not teach, and baptize, as two distinct acts ; but teach, baptizing. And as such a work might seem almost too great for their faith, he adds, that he (who had all power) would be with them in the work, and that to the end of the world.

It is plain that this commission, as it enjoins a very special kind of teaching, such as should baptize the people into true discipleship, as members of the body, the church of Christ ; so it could not be executed but by a supernatural assistance received from on high. "Behold" (said Christ) "I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," Luke xxiv. 49. John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," Acts i. 5. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," verse 8. Thus evident it is, that their being living witnesses of Christ depended on the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them ; and that they could never administer his baptism, till they were thereby so endued, as to teach, baptizing into the same Spirit themselves were baptized with. This baptism into the name, they in due time so eminently received, as they waited for it according to direction—"with
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one accord in one place," Acts ii. 1 ; that is probably in silent retirement, waiting upon God ; that in the power thereof they taught with such baptizing efficacy, that multitudes were pricked in their heart, Acts ii. 37. The Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word, chap. x. 44. Their very enemies were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which they spake, as chap. vi. 10. Thus truly " with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus," chap. iv. 33. And thus they preached the gospel unto the people, " with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," 1 Pet. i. 12. No wonder then it fell on those who in true faith, that was of the operation of God, received the word, and gladly embraced the gospel. Christ promised, " he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ; but this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive," John vii. 38, 39. And what can be more natural than for it to flow into others, as it flows out of them ? especially as Christ's express direction was, " freely ye have received, freely give." It seems the spirit not only flows into, and continues to flow in, the hearts of true believers, but more or less flows out of them upon others ; for they are, as Christ testifies, the " light of the world," Mat. v. 14 ; " the salt of the earth," 13 ; " a city set upon an hill," 14, &c. He promised to make his disciples " fishers of men."

SOME affirm, no man can baptize with the Holy Ghost ; truly none can, in his own time and ability ; nor can any preach the gospel but by divine assistance. All true gospel ministry is in the life of the Son of God, and wherever it proves effectual to the conversion of souls, it is a baptizing ministry. None are fishers of men, but who are made so by Christ : learning and eloquence may amuse, but it is the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven that makes gospel preachers. This sheds itself through such, in a blessed diffusion upon others, oft times, in a very lively, instructive, and soul-benefiting

benefiting manner. And this is a thing as experimentally known, where the real gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is preached in the life, evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with power, as any gospel experience whatever; and it is strange to hear Christians deny it.

Does the preaching of the gospel in our day succeed or not to the real benefit of souls? If not, it is useless. If it does, what causes the benefit? Is it of God, or of man? Art thou so vain, oh! man, as to think thou canst do any spiritual good of thyself, unassisted by the Spirit of Christ? If this is thy idea, thou art no true gospel minister; for they know they can do nothing of themselves.—If thou art sensible of the help, life and assistance of the holy Spirit in thy ministry, and of a divine and beneficial influence on the minds of those who partake of it, thou mayst rest assured, that so far as it is truly so, it is through the operation of the Holy Ghost on their hearts; and whatever be the degree of this, more or less, thy ministry is so far, and no further, a baptizing ministry: so far, and no further, it is truly the ministry of the gospel. And it is thus, and only thus, that it pleaseth “God, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,” 1 Cor. i. 21.—It is very unlikely that any should be saved through preaching, unless thereby baptized with the one saving baptism, for nothing else can ever save. Hence, clear it is, that through true gospel preaching, this baptism is administered to them that believe; the word preached being mixed with faith in them that hear it. And no ministry that is not in its own nature, life and influence, baptizing, is in any degree the ministry of the gospel.—But, thanks be unto God, there is yet preserved a living, powerful and heart-baptizing ministry; and many are the living witnesses of it, and of its blessed effects; and I am well confirmed, that no rightly qualified gospel minister can doubt of the baptizing influence of right ministry. He who knows
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Christ, living, acting and speaking in him, knows that which alone baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire. "I in them, and thou in me," says Christ to his Father, John xvii. 23. And many other texts declare Christ in us; and true and blessed experience indubitably confirms it. What then can be too hard for his ministers, in and under his influence? Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13. But Christ himself puts the matter beyond all reasonable dispute, John xiv. 12; and he asserts it with a "verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." Hence Paul says, "I have begotten you, through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15; and speaks of imparting spiritual gifts, Rom. i. 11. Hence, on the laying on of the Apostles hands, "the Holy Ghost was given," Acts viii. 18. Hence, as Peter began to speak to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on them. And hence Christ says (in consideration that it was he who spake in his disciples, and his Father in him, and so in them) "he that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me," Mat. x. 40. On this ground Paul calls himself "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16. And verse 18 he adds, "for I will not dare to speak of any of these things, which Christ hath not wrought by me." Well then might he speak of ministering the gospel, which is the power of God; seeing it was all the work of Christ by him, and resulted in sanctification, by the Holy Ghost, the baptizing power of the gospel. Indeed the very design of the gospel ministry is to open people's eyes, and to turn them from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18.

THIS ministry lays the axe to the root of the corrupt trees in men's hearts, and therein is executing the very
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work of Christ. It is truly Christ that does the work ; but he works much by instruments : John was a great instrument in his hand : his ministry was very useful in helping to kindle that fire which was to burn up the chaff. He powerfully taught the necessity of this fiery baptism, and of renouncing all dependence on being Abraham's children. This was a good beginning, and was a very necessary preparation for Christ, who had afterwards still further, and pressingly too, to combat and alarm that disposition, perhaps as prevalent now as at that day ; and that among too many professing Christians, may I not say, of all denominations ? I belong to this or that reformed and truly religious society ; we are in the true faith and practice of the Apostles. Here thousands stick in a lifeless profession, as to themselves ; and yet imagine themselves the true seed and offspring of Abraham, spiritually. And it is very hard removing them from their strong holds, or making them sensible of the need of the axe and the fire. John's ministry was to such, doubtless, truly awakening. And then, as already observed, his dipping them, not partly, but all over in water, was a lively and very striking representation of the baptism whereby Christ thoroughly cleanseth the floor of the heart. And to point out this, and to enkindle a desire to experience it, was all that outward dipping could do, save to wash away the outward filth of the flesh. It could do nothing in itself towards real remission of sins ; that is the work of Christ, and the soul is brought to experience it through his baptism. Hence John was very careful to prevent the idea of his own baptism being saving. He never once speaks of it, that I recollect, but he adds the word water, to turn the mind from resting in it, as a thing in any wise profitable, further than as it represented a perfect cleansing and purification by Christ's, and engaged them to press after it. I indeed baptize you with the water, but Christ shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire, and thereby cleanse you thoroughly within, as I wash, or dip you all over outwardly, is the import of John's testimony. And
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three times, in eight verses, speaking of his own baptism, he every time carefully adds the word water, in contradistinction to Christ's. First, being examined why he baptized, if he was not Christ, Elias, nor that prophet; it seems he thought it apology enough to tell them, John i. 26, "I baptize with water;" and refer them to Christ for gospel baptism, that is of the Holy Ghost. For outward water being no part of Christ's baptism, but being long before then in some sort practised among the Jews, it was no intrusion into Christ's office for John to baptize with it. So that this short answer of John, that he only baptized with water (an old practice) an outward, and comparatively a low thing, entirely different from Christ's baptism, and no part of it, was amply sufficient to exculpate John from any just imputation of meddling with things too high for him, or belonging to another. But further to evince how careful John was to keep up the distinction that for ever exists, in the very ground and nature of them, between his baptism and Christ's—we find that in the 31st verse he again dwells on or repeats this important distinction, by the word water, "that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water"—and no further on than the next verse but one, the 33d, he again holds up the same distinction; "he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."—One would think this three-fold testimony, all in so short a time, might satisfy every sober mind that water baptism, and that of Christ, are entirely two distinct and separate things; and more especially, as touching water, it is very particularly recorded that Jesus himself baptized not. He might and did, with a great deal of wisdom and condescending goodness, as noted before, allow his disciples to do it, in that weak and early state and stage of things, before all the shadows could well be laid aside, their minds not being then able to bear it: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot

not

not bear them now," John xvi. 12. And as the disciples did, through this all-wise permission, baptize considerable numbers, and that upon their faith in and following Jesus, and becoming his disciples, it was but natural for the people to consider it as if Christ had done it himself. Nor is it at all strange therefore that "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)" John iv. 1, 2. And as what a man does by others, he is often called the doer of; so the people then (supposing the disciples baptized by Christ's authority and commission, because they were his disciples and followers whom they so baptized) said he baptized; but it is clear enough that he only suffered it, and that in condescension; nor do I believe it would ever have been so carefully recorded that he himself baptized not, had outward water been any part of his baptism; but his baptism being quite another thing, he saw it proper wholly to avoid administering outward water as an ordinance; and that probably lest it should countenance an idea that it belonged to his gospel and kingdom; and so strengthen the already too strong attachment of the people to things outward; and to prevent this in after times, it was also proper, that it should be expressly recorded that "Jesus himself baptized not;" and in confirmation of these sentiments it may be observed, that he never once on any occasion enjoined it on any to baptize, or be baptized, in water—we read particularly what he did, and what he ordered done, on divers particular occasions.—Many believed on him, many he healed, and cast out devils; but never a word that he either baptized any of these, or ordered them baptized, in water.—We read expressly, that he directed one to go and offer for his cleansing "the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them," Mat. viii. 4. Another he ordered to "go wash in the pool of Siloam," John ix. 7: but not an instance of any one ordered by him to be baptized by another in water. But had water baptism been his, or any part of his gospel, it would have been

a strange thing indeed had he never vouchsafed once to administer it, nor order it done on any of the multitudes that believed on him, or out of whom he cast devils, or whom he healed. And even this omission alone, it prevailing throughout the whole history of his life, both before and after his resurrection, were in my view sufficient to overthrow the notion of water baptism being a gospel ordinance.

WHAT! appoint a solemn ordinance, even a sacrament (as some call it) of perpetual obligation in the church, and never once deign to administer it, or order it administered to any individual, among all the thousands who became his disciples? This were strange indeed; and to me is quite incredible, and inadmissible. Indeed among all the very pointed and remarkable prophecies concerning Christ, there is not one in all the Old Testament that points him out as the administrator of water baptism, or as establishing a church or kingdom accompanied with any such outward ordinances. The Father, by Isaiah, speaks of him as the Lord's Elect, in whom his soul delighteth; declaring, Is. xlii. 1, "I have put my Spirit upon him"—giving him "for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners, and them that sat in darkness," &c. and further, "behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them." But not a word, among all these new things, of his baptizing in outward water. His work was to bring forth judgment unto truth, enlighten the Gentiles, bring out of prison and darkness, "bring the blind by a way they knew not," an inward spiritual way; not the way of signs, shadows, and outward ordinances—these were the old things; "I will lead them in paths that they have not known." These are inward.

AGAIN, Is. lii. 13, "Behold my servant shall deal prudently," &c.—15, "so shall he sprinkle many nations,"

tions," &c. He was indeed more truly wise and prudent, than to practise or esteem outward sprinkling or dipping as a gospel ordinance; his is a spiritual sprinkling, as explained Ez. xxxvi. 25, "then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." The 26th and 27th verses promise a new heart and new spirit—the Lord's Spirit put within them. Such things as these did the prophets foretel—but not once in all their predictions, of return, reformation, restoration, and building the waste places, and the like, do they ever mention or hint at Christ's baptizing with water, or establishing any such kind of shadowy institutions in his glorious gospel church. Nor did Christ, when he came, ever once, that we read of, call that of water his baptism. Indeed it is never once so called in all the Bible, that I can find. And, moreover, I do not find that Christ ever called it by any other name than John's baptism. And is it not wonderful, that he should constantly, and as often as he spake of water baptism, call it John's, if it was as truly his own, as John's? Or how can we suppose he ordained it as a standing ordinance in his church, and yet never mentioned it once as such?—Why should he leave his followers, to the world's end, under the great difficulties and disadvantages of such a total silence, if he willed them to use it as his baptism? Was Moses more faithful in his house, than Christ in his? Moses was very particular in describing the rituals of the law, even to very minute circumstances: and would Christ ordain a perpetual institution, and never once call it his own, but always call it John's? He knew very well that both himself, John, and others, called and understood water baptism to be John's. He also knew his own was repeatedly placed in direct contradistinction to it—and said to be with the Holy Ghost. So that in commissioning his disciples to administer his own baptism, there was no need to describe it over again; for it had been so often expressly defined, and distinguished from that of water, that he might well suppose no real disciple of his need be at a loss to know what he meant

by the word baptizing in his great gospel commission—and especially after having so abundantly, and on so many occasions, taught them the inward and spiritual nature of his kingdom, and so repeatedly turned their minds from outward observations, to inward realities.

BUT had he instituted water baptism, after all this, as a gospel ordinance, it would have been highly requisite for him to have expressed it to be water, in the most particular manner—much more so than if his baptism had never been named as different from water. He might well know his followers would be apt to conclude he instituted his own baptism, and not one which had so repeatedly been expressly distinguished therefrom. He might well know that those whose minds were, at least in degree, opened by his repeated endeavours to turn them from things outward to things inward, from signs to substance, would not be unlikely to understand his words to mean spiritually; instead of turning back, to suppose him now at last bringing them in bondage to weak and beggarly elements. He had comforted their sorrowful souls with a promise of coming again to them in spirit, and taking up his abode with them, and thus remaining with them to the end of the world.—Almost every thing he had said to them, for some time past, had tended directly and indeed been by him designed, to lead inward, and to a spiritual discerning and understanding of things; so that had he now, just before he left them, turned back, and in direct contradiction to the very nature of his gospel and kingdom, and to the whole scope and tenor of his own excellent parables and discourses, instituted an outward baptism or supper, it might surely be expected he would have told them expressly what he intended—nor can I suppose he would by any means have omitted it.—I am so well assured of the spirituality of the gospel, and of Christ's doctrines and discourses, that I cannot entertain the least idea, but that had he established outward signs, he would have very explicitly declared them to be outward.—Others may think otherwise.

otherwise. But though I have great charity and good-will for many who adhere to those signs, I cannot but think, that where they come to have a full view of the purity of the gospel state, and a clear understanding of the drift and design of Christ's many hints, intimations, and heavenly communications, to his disciples, they must see the total abolition of all the mere rituals, both of John and of Moses.

It is often urged, that Christ's disciples baptized in water. I conceive this no more perpetuates water baptism, than their circumcising, purifying, shaving, vows, anointing the sick with oil, abstaining from blood, and from things strangled, perpetuate these things in the church.—These two last were expressly enjoined by the elders, even upon the Gentiles, and that after deliberate consideration and debate, at the time of the great council at Jerusalem, Acts 15, though at the same time, through assistance of the Holy Ghost, they decreed against circumcising the Gentiles, and considered circumcision as an uneasy yoke; yet in the beginning of the very next chapter, we read that Paul, though he and Timothy had these very decrees to deliver, to be kept as they passed through the cities, even at such a juncture as this, he acted so greatly in condescension to the weakness of the Jews, that he circumcised Timothy, because of them; and after he had passed on, and they had delivered said decrees, on his return again to Jerusalem, all the elders, with James (who had pointedly decided against circumcision in regard to the Gentiles) told Paul that many thousands of the Jews believed; that they were zealous of circumcision and the law of Moses, and advised him to purify himself, and be at charges, &c. with four men that had a vow; that so those over-zealous Jews might see he kept the law, and walked orderly, Acts xxi. 20—24. And yet in the next verse they say, “as touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing,” &c. So we read, ver. 26, “then

Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." So very great was the condescension of the primitive Apostles and elders to the weak state of the people in those early times.—To the weak, Paul says he became weak, yea that he was made all things to all men, that he might save some, 1 Cor. ix. 22; and this he expressly declares he did for the gospel sake, verse 23.—Yea further he says expressly, he caught them with guile, 2 Cor. xii. 16. This kind of condescending guile they doubtless thought necessary in those times of weakness and zeal for ordinances.—Paul's knowledge of Christ was by revelation, and so he saw clearly beyond those outside things, and knew that neither they, nor water baptism, could possibly belong to the gospel. Hence, though on the same principle of condescension he baptized a few, he thanked God it was so very few; and declared he was not sent commissioned to do it, 1 Cor. i. 17. Had he not known it was not Christ's baptism, nor within the great commission, he would not have dared to affront his Lord, by thanking him that he had so almost totally neglected his great gospel ordinance.—Paul's commission to the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 18, is expressly "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." This is as full, and contains the very sum and essence of the general commission, Mat. xxviii. 19, &c. and Mark xvi. only that it seems confined to the Gentiles.

THE general commission is, to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c. and declares that he that believeth, and is so baptized, shall be saved.—Paul's commission is to open the eyes of the Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to the light, and from the power of Satan to God. And if any can doubt whether

ther this is the same baptizing ministry of the gospel, mentioned in the more general commission, let the concluding words of Paul's commission be duly weighed, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."—Here they were not only to receive forgiveness of sins, but the same inheritance with all the other sanctified, and that through the same faith; for thus believing, they were baptized through the powerful ministry of the Apostle, which was in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, &c. into the life, power, and virtue, of the same eternal name: they were turned truly unto God; and thus truly believing, and being livingly and sanctifyingly baptized into the same holy name, and into the same heavenly inheritance, and therein abiding, the promise that they shall be saved, was equally in force to them, as to others so believing and being so baptized: that if there is any essential difference in these two commissions, as to what was to be done by those sent forth in the execution of them; I have not yet discovered it, except in Paul's limitation to the Gentiles; and I have not the least doubt but that Paul did, in the execution of this commission, as truly baptize into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as ever an Apostle of Christ did, under the general commission; yea, did administer the very same baptism therein enjoined, that is Christ's, and not John's. I am full in the faith, that Paul well knew the general commission contained no precept for water baptism. He knew too well the nature and spirituality of Christ's kingdom, to suppose it did—and therefore doing what he did, at baptizing with water, in mere condescension, he might as well, when he saw the abuse made of it, thank God that he had done no more—as he might that he had circumcised no more; for as neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, simply, is any thing in this kingdom; so neither is baptism nor non-baptism in water, simply, any thing at all therein—but the new creature: and this is all in all in this spiritual kingdom.

SOME

SOME may think I make very bold with gospel ordinances, as they call them; but though I feel tenderness towards many who think them such, I am at no loss in pronouncing them no real parts of the gospel.—And if they had been, why did not the great council at Jerusalem, when it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to lay upon the Gentiles no greater burthen than the few things they then named, mention water baptism, and the bread and wine, as things necessary to be punctually observed? Paul was in that council: and he knew water baptism was designed that Christ “might be made manifest to Israel”—and did not with the Gentiles burthened with it, any more than with circumcision. He and others, as occasion might seem to require, in becoming all things to all men, in those early times of weakness and misguided zeal for externals, might condescend to baptize either a Jew or a Gentile: but neither the one nor the other could any more be brought under this sign, as a gospel ordinance, than under the many signs and symbols of the Mosaic law. I could go through every instance recorded in scripture, where it was used by the Apostles, and I think clearly evince, that in no one case it was used as strictly pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah, nor under or according to his great gospel commission: but so much of this kind has been done by others, as Dell, Barclay, Penn, Pike, Claridge, Forster, Phipps, Fothergill, &c. that I think it not necessary to be so particular; firmly believing, that when men lay aside all preconceived opinions, and look fully and fairly into the nature and design of the gospel, in the true light and life of it, they must unavoidably see all these “old things done away;” and perceive how earnest Paul in particular was, to prevent the believers from degenerating into an attachment to and reliance on things outward. Read the whole epistle to the Galatians; it abounds with his care on this account. And if we go to the bottom of things, we shall find the same need of pressing forward to the disuse of water baptism, as of other ceremonials. It is as mere a ceremony, as merely
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figurative, as was circumcision, or any of the divers washings ; has no more in its nature or effects to support its continuance ; and is no more perpetuated among the precepts and injunctions of Jesus.

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CHAP. V.

*Remarks on several passages in " A Plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism" (as the author calls it.)* He is or was a sensible writer ; but striving to unite old shadows with the gospel, he, like all who attempt it, blunders. Christ takes the lambs in his bosom, and bears with much weakness. The veil is done away in Christ. He is the end of all things. His are not subject to ordinances, in things that perish with the using. If all waited God's sending, water baptism, &c. would cease, and preaching would all be in baptizing efficacy. The non-experience of this, a cause of doubt in many, whether gospel ministry is baptizing. Christ's ministers not always ready, but minister the Spirit to others, as it is given them. The words, " into the name of the Father," &c. not a form to use in so low an act as that of water baptism. Hence never once so used by the Primitives ; but doubtless would have been, had water been the baptism of the commission. Peter's commanding baptism at Cornelius', no more perpetuates it, than Paul's baptizing Crispus and Gaius, though not sent to do it ; nor any more than the use of circumcision, purifying, anointing with oil, &c. perpetuate them. The name, is the virtue, power, &c. Christ Lord of the Sabbath-day—and of all figurative institutions made under the law, to redeem those under it. Then John was under it, so his baptism ended. It was in some sort used under the law, long before John. Old rituals not to be incorporated into Christ's pure religion and worship. His talk with the woman of Samaria, and with John's disciples, import this. His fast is inward.

**I**T is remarkable how strongly the advocates for dipping or plunging insist, in their arguings against the Pædo



Pædo Baptists, or such as sprinkle infants, upon a plain, full, and express command. This I think they pretty generally maintain to be necessary. The author of "A plain account of the ordinance of baptism," as he calls it, and who seems to be as sensible a writer as almost any I have read in defence of water baptism by immersion, maintains these propositions, page 4, Boston edition.

"I. THE receiving of baptism is not a duty of itself, or a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty, made such to Christians by the positive institution of Jesus Christ.

"II. ALL positive duties, or duties made such by institution alone, depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real design and end of them; and consequently to the due manner of performing them.

"III. It is plain, therefore, that the nature, the design, and the due manner of receiving baptism, must of necessity depend upon what Jesus Christ, who instituted it, hath declared about it."

ON which I would remark, that if the nature, end and design, with the due manner of administering and receiving Christ's baptism, must depend entirely upon what he himself hath declared about it, I think it is plain, that the nature of it is altogether inward and spiritual. He never once calls outward baptism with water his; never once declares any such thing about his, as that elementary water or any other outward thing belongs to it; but distinguishing his own from that of water, says plainly, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Acts i. 5.

AND

AND as to the manner of its administration, he has not declared one word about its being by dipping in outward water. On the contrary, what he does expressly declare, as to its administration by his apostles, shews it to be by and through the efficacy of their powerful gospel ministry. They were to teach baptizing : and that not into water, but "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."— And even this very author, in reciting this passage, this great commission, both affirms it to be "the first account of baptism as a Christian institution:" and renders it "into the name," &c. p. 39. Now if, as he asserts, this is "the first account of baptism as a Christian institution," and if this is so very different from that which was in water, that it is into the eternal name, how could he add water to this institution, and yet repeatedly maintain the absolute necessity of a plain and express declaration from Christ himself, both as to the nature, end and design; and also the due manner of performing and receiving Christian baptism? This he urges again and again. See page 45. "It cannot be doubted Jesus Christ sufficiently declared to his first and immediate followers, the whole of what he designed should be understood by or implied in this duty; for this being a positive institution, depending entirely upon his will, and not designed to contain any thing in it but what he himself should please to affix to it, it must follow, that he declared his mind about it fully and plainly; because, otherwise, he must be supposed to institute a duty of which no one could have any notion without his institution, and at the same time not to instruct his followers sufficiently what that duty was to be." If this is good reasoning against sprinkling infants, why not as good against dipping adults in material water, since Christ never once mentions either as belonging to his baptism? And yet this sensible author will not allow any thing at all in it, or to be understood, or even implied in it, but what Christ fully and plainly declared his mind about: and then queries, "Where has Jesus Christ declared his mind, and

and declared it fully and plainly, that infants are to receive Christian baptism?" Now, serious reader, let us just vary the terms of this question, and ask, "Where has Jesus Christ declared his mind fully and plainly—nay, where has he declared it at all, that adults are to be baptized in water? or where has he ever declared material water to pertain to his baptism?" I believe the text where he has declared this is not in the Bible, any more than the other; and also that dipping adults outwardly, is no more the baptism Christ ordained, than sprinkling infants; and that the foregoing reasoning is as substantially conclusive in one case, as the other.

BUT he goes on, and asks, "Is not our Saviour's commission far from declaring fully and plainly in favour of children's baptism, perfectly silent on this head?"—And I ask, is it not as perfectly silent about water?—But he further asks, "does it say any more than this, make disciples, converts, believers, amongst all nations, and baptize them?" Here I answer, yes; it is not only perfectly silent as to water, as not at all intended therein; it expressly enjoins into what they are to be baptized, the name of the Father, &c. But had it said no more than make disciples, baptizing them, he who presumes to add water, adds that which Christ has nowhere enjoined; but has emphatically distinguished from his baptism. And he who separates baptizing from teaching, in this commission, and represents the baptism here enjoined, as enjoined to be otherwise administered than by the baptizing ministry of the gospel, puts asunder what Christ here plainly joined together.

Page 41, 42, he says, "When therefore our blessed Saviour, after his resurrection, instituted his sacrament of baptism, if infants were to be received to it, it cannot be doubted that he himself sufficiently declared this to his first and immediate followers, which sufficient and only authentic declaration must appear in some passage of the New Testament." "There seems" (says he)

he) "the greatest reason to expect some express declaration on this head, because otherwise men who had hitherto been used to exclude infants, and to look upon them no way concerned in the ordinance of baptism, would be likely still to pass them by, and not think of them as coming within the reach of their fresh commission. Men who, during John's ministry, had already baptized an infinite multitude of the adult only amongst the Jews, would naturally conclude, on their being sent forth to practise the same rite among the Gentiles, that with them also the adult only were proper subjects, unless there appeared something upon the face of their commission to teach them otherwise." Now does not this hold altogether as forcibly against immersion in water? let us read the argument thus: when our Saviour, after his resurrection, commissioned his disciples to administer his one saving baptism, if outward water belonged to it, it cannot be doubted that he himself sufficiently declared this to his first and immediate followers; which sufficient and only authentic declaration must appear in some passage of the New Testament. There seems the greatest reason to expect some express declaration on this head; because, otherwise, men who had hitherto been used to hear water baptism called John's, and pointedly distinguished from Christ's, and Christ's expressly declared to be quite another thing, the Holy Ghost and fire, in which it were very absurd to suppose material water to have any part, might be very likely still to reject water, as not at all within the meaning of a commission confined wholly to the one saving baptism and ministry of the gospel, which was to continue to the end of the world, and which could not be administered without the immediate presence and help of Christ in spirit; and therefore required their waiting at Jerusalem, till they were "endued with power from on high," before they could execute the commission.

Men who, during John's ministry, had baptized many of the Jews into his watery baptism, and had  
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considered it only as his, and as preparing the way for Christ's, might very naturally, on being sent to baptize the Gentiles with Christ's baptism, and for qualification, promised his divine presence or the enduement of "power from on high," conclude that water baptism was still but John's, and required no more power from above to administer it now than before; but that Christ's, being, as they had ever been taught, entirely a different baptism, required quite different qualifications to administer it; and which, accordingly, they were promised to receive, and directed to wait for, before they went forth, or indeed could possibly go forth, in this commission. All this, the very nature of Christ's baptism, the manner and terms of the commission, and the qualifications expressly pointed out therein, as necessary to its execution, might naturally lead them to conclude, unless there had also something appeared upon the face of their commission to teach them otherwise, and turn their minds from Christ's to John's baptism; which yet, in itself, were, in such a commission, unaccountably absurd. But prejudice has such a powerful influence, that many texts are read and quoted in support of elementary water, which speak only of the spiritual water of the word. I even admire at the misapplication of a considerable number, in this way, by the author now mentioned; and perhaps I may, before I have done, point some of them out; though I aim not at controversy, but the advancement of all, beyond signs and shadows, to the life and substance. And this I think will be the case with such as fully adhere to the best part of the sentiments contained in their best writings; as for instance the foregoing in the present author's account.

AND again, p. 46, "A limited commission amounts to a prohibition of the things not therein contained." This he doubtless thought, and doubtless many of his readers still think it conclusive against infant sprinkling. I think it is much so against outward immersion. The commission is as much limited in one case as the other,

other, and as much "amounts to a prohibition." Let then this sentiment be admitted in its full force and latitude, and it will lead to the unshadowy dispensation of gospel realities, to the baptism that now saves us. But instead of this, too many are acting, as he says the Romanist does, about infallibility, p. 71. "Thus" (says he) "the Romanist, in an affair whose nature admits of none but positive evidence, endeavours to make up the want of it by inference, and reasoning from fitness. Such an institution there was under the Old Testament, therefore it remains under the New." And do not both Pædo and Antipædo-Baptists endeavour to make out water to Christ's baptism, which is wholly wanting in the words of his commission, and wholly repugnant to the nature and design of his baptism by inference? And is it not urged upon us by them, from what was under a former dispensation too, and that a decreasing one, and designed to terminate, and be fulfilled in Christ?—whose gospel and baptism is the power of God unto salvation to true believers?—p. 61, he speaks of sureties for infants, as entirely a supplement.—I say the same of water.—It is entirely a supplement, that men strive hard to add to the gospel.—But in the matter of an instituted duty, he maintains "no one can be a judge but the institutor himself of what he designed should be contained in it, and because, supposing him not to have spoken his mind plainly about it, it is impossible that any other person (to whom the institutor himself never revealed his design) should make up that defect: all that is added, therefore" (says he) "to Christ's institution as a necessary part of it, ought to be esteemed only as the invention of those who add it: and the more there is added (let it be done with never so much solemnity, and never so great pretences to authority) the less there is remaining of the simplicity of the institution, as Christ himself left it." p. 61.

WHAT pity it is, reader, that men who can argue so closely against human inferences, additions, supplements and inventions, do not so feel the force of their

own arguments, as to leave all additions, and come home to the naked simplicity of Christ's institutions, as he himself has left them to us.—But he goes on saying, “ I am the more solicitous to observe this, and to impress it upon the minds of Christians, because it is the only thing that can either prevent or cure the mistakes of many sincere Christians upon this subject\*.” He says, p. 54, “ the people called Quakers are of opinion, that the baptism of the spirit is the alone Christian baptism, and the baptism of water belonged only to the dispensation of John. But in the case of Cornelius we have an instance under the Christian dispensation, and upon the call of the Gentiles to the faith of the gospel, wherein it appears the Apostle Peter is so far from concluding the baptism of the spirit renders that of water unnecessary, that he infers directly the contrary, viz. no man ought to be against their baptism in water, because they had, previously, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then baptism with the Holy Ghost was the proof and reason of their right to the baptism of water.”

THIS argument should be well examined; no doubt it weighs much with many, and seems to them unanswerable: but to me there is something in it which tends directly to the confirmation of the Quaker's doctrine, and the overthrow of his own. The Quaker says, “ the baptism of the spirit is the alone Christian baptism, and the baptism of water belonged only to the dispensation of John.” But this author, throughout his “ plain account,” insists on immersion in water, as the baptism of Christ. Now there is but “ one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,” belonging to the Christian dispensation—but here this author, three times,

\* And yet, after all his solicitude to observe and impress these sentiments, he has himself, throughout his performance, mistakenly kept up, and endeavoured to maintain, the addition and supplement of an outward sign (for he repeatedly calls it a sign himself) to the institution of an important and soul-saving ordinance of the gospel. So hard is it either to prevent or cure the mistakes of many sincere Christians upon this subject.

times, mentions expressly both the baptism of the spirit, or Holy Ghost, and the baptism of water, as distinct things, as two baptisms, and urges them being both used in the case of Cornelius, as proof that water baptism belongs to the gospel.—Will he say, Christ instituted two baptisms? if not, as there were two mentioned, it is plain one only of them was Christ's. If Christ's is but one, and that one be that of the Holy Ghost, then that with water is not Christ's, but, as the Quaker says, was John's. On the other hand, if Christ's is but one, and that one be immersion in elementary water, then that of the Holy Ghost is not Christ's.—So that this instance, instead of proving water baptism to be Christ's, proves the quite contrary; and powerfully confirms the Quaker's doctrine, that it was only John's, and was continued through condescension to the weakness of many in that early state of things in the Christian church. And as it was administered to some before, and to others after they received Christ's baptism of the Holy Ghost, I think nothing can be gathered from this instance in support of the right, the divine right, as he elsewhere calls it, of outward immersion under the gospel, unless it be granted that such as received immersion before the baptism of the spirit, had no right to it; the which to grant, is at once giving up several of the supposed strong holds in favour of water.

INDEED whoever attempts to prove signs and shadows part of the gospel, will ever meet with insurmountable difficulties: hence we find many attendant on every attempt (however ingeniously executed) to dignify water baptism to the degree of an ordinance with Jesus.—But when we once come to the genuine simplicity of the gospel, these difficulties vanish; and nothing seems more natural and easy, nothing more consonant to plain scripture, and the necessity of occasions, than these frequent condescensions, in times of weakness, and therein those diverse continuations of things, in point of obligation, ceased, which are recorded in



the New Testament.—Indeed, this very condescension is one eminent display both of the wisdom and compassionate goodness of our Saviour.—It exhibits him equal to all states and conditions, “touched with a feeling of our infirmities,” commiserating our weakness, taking the lambs in his bosom, and “gently leading those that are with young;” feeding them with food they could bear, milk before strong meat; and indulging them with signs, till they could see the all-sufficiency of the substance, to which all the signs pointed—“there is a time to every purpose;”—and, says Christ, if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” John iii. 12. He knew what was in man, knew all his attachments and weaknesses, and graciously stooped to the lowest, darkest, and most literal state of sincere seekers; waiting patiently their gradual advancement to a state of pure spiritual worship, void of “all old things,” of every sign and symbol.—And I have a full persuasion and belief, that such is his condescending goodness and forbearance, in our days, towards great numbers of sincere-hearted disciples, who are still, even in reading the New Testament, so far under the vail as not to perceive the abolition of certain ceremonials, which never did, and in the nature of things never could, belong to the gospel: and the travail and prayer of my soul is, that they may not, as too many certainly and sorrowfully do to their great hindrance in the true Christian progress, settle down, and stick in these things; but may pass forward into the mystery of Christ, till they experience the vail entirely done away in him.—The vail is done away in Christ.—This is the joyful experience of such as are livingly in him the life, the substance, the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit, the light of men, and inward hope of glory: but a mere profession of Christ can never do away the vail.—“The covering is spread over the face of all nations”—and is as thick, and dark over the minds of nominal Christians, yea, thousands who are high in profession of Christ, and zealous in exterior

exterior performances, as it is over any persons whatever, or ever was over the Jews in reading Moses.— And though the God of all grace is pleased to permit many upright hearted men and women to remain so under the veil as still to use and plead for these exteriors; yea, some who are in a degree preachers of the gospel; yet, blessed be his holy name, he is not without, but has raised up and preserved, many living witnesses, from time to time, to the pure spirituality of his gospel kingdom, who are truly of the inward heart, “circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,” Phil. iii. 3. These dare not confide in touch, taste, handle, or become subject to ordinances, in these things, which perish with the using. Col. ii. 20, 21, 22.

MANY such there are, even in our day, who can truly “thank God” that he has shewn them clearly the emptiness and abrogation of all these things, and can truly declare, with Paul, touching water baptism, that “God sent them not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” And it is believed, that if the preachers of our day were all to wait till God sent them to baptize in water, or not to run without his commission and sending, we should soon see a total cessation of the practice, and no real loss to Christianity neither.— Indeed, if they were all to wait his sending, before and until they commence preachers, there would doubtless be abundantly less of that teaching which is not baptizing. And is it not highly probable, that one great reason why many, under such teaching, cannot believe the gospel ministry is truly according to the gospel commission, “teach, baptizing,”—in their non-experience of the power and efficacy of the pure living ministry of the gospel, which is always in the power of God, and is more or less to the salvation of them that believe? But where there is a living ministry in purity preserved, and where the living word, thus livingly preached, is mixed with true faith (which is ever of the operation of God) in them that hear it; these  
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can set to their seal, that such do really "minister to them the spirit." See Gal. iii. 5, "he therefore that ministereth to you the spirit." Here "the excellency of the power is of God," even though we have this treasure in earthen vessels, 2 Cor. iv. 7.—Though it is men, that out of this good treasure of the heart bring forth excellent things, "minister the spirit," impart spiritual gifts, and actually baptize into the life and spirit, name and power, of the Father, &c.—yea, beget souls to God; as Paul says, "I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15; yet the instruments have no sufficiency of themselves;—their "sufficiency is of God," who maketh them able ministers of the New Testament, "not of the letter, but of the spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.—Hence Paul said, he would "know not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. Were all to keep strictly to this life and power of the kingdom, these signs would cease for ever; and we should have no other ministry, but the pure baptizing ministry of the gospel. And here ariseth the necessity of waiting upon the Lord, for the renewal of strength, and qualification for all gospel ministry; that so the power may indeed be of God; as the Apostles waited to be "endued with power from on high."—And those who so wait, and dare not run of themselves, or preach in their own time, or at one time, because they have at another, they follow the great shepherd, learn his experience, and are led in his footsteps:—their hour is not always;—it frequently is not yet come, as was the case with him: but great is their advantage, by this experience and limitation; for when it does come, it comes with power; and they know the life and meaning of Christ's words, John xx. 21, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."—And surely he was sent of the Father, to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and did do it, and that even in preaching the gospel to the meek. And as he was anointed for this service by the Spirit of the Lord, that was upon

upon him, as before noticed, in order that his ministers might be qualified for the like service, and be sent in like manner as he was; immediately "when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost," ver. 22; and thus qualified by the same anointing, and sent forth in the same service, they were enabled to work the same works, according to his promise; John xiv. 12, "verily, verily" (mark the certainty of it) "I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." But why because he went to the Father? because he would then pray the Father, and the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, should be sent to abide with them for ever, to lead and guide them into all truth; and qualify them to work the works of God.

PAUL exhorts Timothy, "that good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us," 2 Tim. i. 14. And was not this good thing truly, as Paul calls it, "the gift of God?" and yet was it not in Timothy by the putting on of Paul's hands? 2 Tim. i. 6. Thus we see, as in other instances, "through laying on of the Apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given," Acts viii. 18, and why not as easily by their preaching? It is evident, that it was given by their preaching, which was in the divine power, as well as by the laying on of hands, in the same power, and that too in this very instance, the case of Timothy; for says Paul to him, "neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Here Paul declares this gift of God was given by prophecy, as well as by laying on hands. And what is prophecy? It is preaching the gospel; for "he that prophesieth" (says Paul) "speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort," 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

Great



Great edification and comfort indeed attend such truly gospel prophesying and teaching, when thereby he that thus speaketh unto men, "ministereth unto them the spirit," the gift of God, that is thus given to them, as a good thing indeed, and which, after they have received it, they cannot keep it, "but by the Holy Ghost that is in them."—It is the spirit that first quickeneth; and as these quickenings are attended to, an increasing with the increase of God is happily experienced; even "grace, for" (the faithful improvement of) "grace."—And after all improvements and communications of grace, or the Holy Ghost, it is still this alone that can enable us to keep this precious treasure, which we have thus graciously received from God; being given to us, of him, in our earthen vessels. It is neither speaking, nor laying on of hands, in a formal manner, that can convey divine influence to the soul, or qualify for divine service. The power is only of God; and he that is not immediately impowered of God, has nothing more to do, either with preaching or laying on hands, than Simon the forcerer, who would have bought with money the privilege of communicating the Holy Ghost, that he might trade with it, as I conclude, and make money by the business.

It is probable the sign of laying on of hands was, in that weak and early state of the church, or of many young converts, made use of as a confirmation, thereby strengthening their faith in the truth of the gospel; and in the power attending the apostles; but is neither needful where the gospel is generally established, nor, out of the life, any more availing than the brazen serpent was to Israel, after its real use was ceased, and they were become ensnared by an idolatrous attachment to it, and dependence on it. The minds of men, not single to divine light, are ever liable to mistake the real use and design of such things; to continue them out of all proper season, and rely too much upon them. Hence the continuation of water baptism, bread and wine, laying on of hands, &c. among Christians, even

to this day, as of Israel's lifeless looking to that mere piece of brass, for several hundred years; formerly, and long after its real use was over, and when no good was derived from their formal looking to it.

ANANIAS was sent to Paul expressly, Acts ix. 17, that he might "be filled with the Holy Ghost." Then surely he instrumentally dispensed or ministered it to him, ~~or~~ (which is the same thing) baptized him with it.

SOME contend against baptizing spiritually by teaching in the power of the gospel, and urge that the gift of tongues always attended the baptism of the Holy Ghost. If so, who have this baptism in our day? Will it be granted that none are now baptized with the baptism of Christ? Then the saints now receive none but John's. But there are divers instances in the New Testament of persons baptized with the Holy Ghost, where not a word is said of their speaking with tongues, as the attentive reader may see for himself.

PETER, in relating his visit to Cornelius, mentions the angel's saying to him, to wit, that he (Peter) should tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. This shews his words would be with baptizing efficacy; that he would, as he certainly did, baptize them with the Holy Ghost: he taught baptizingly, according to commission; and he himself evidently considers that baptism with the Holy Ghost, which they received through his teaching, as an exact accomplishment both of this saying of the angel, and of our Lord's promise in regard to the baptism of the Holy Ghost.— Do, kind reader, examine the passage for thyself, Acts xi. where the angel, speaking of Peter, says to Cornelius, verse 14, "who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." In the very next sentence, to shew how exactly this was verified, Peter says, verse 15, "and as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." Here he

he plainly connects their reception of the Holy Ghost through his ministry, with the saying of the angel, that he should tell them words, by which they should be saved. Indeed, how could he possibly tell them words by which they should be saved, unless baptizing influence attended his words? Nothing ever saves the soul, without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Had I heard the angel tell Cornelius, that Peter would tell him words by which he should be saved, I think it would to me have been sufficient evidence that Peter's words should be with baptizing power. And this I think might be depended on, seeing nothing saves short of "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And on this ground we might take it for certain, from this saying of the angel, that Peter's powerful teaching was to prove baptizing to Cornelius and his household, whether Christ had ever verbally commissioned him and the other apostles to teach baptizingly or not; and whether Peter had ever related that he did so or not. But seeing Christ did so commissionate them, and seeing the angel did declare, that Peter should deliver words by which men should be saved; and seeing none can be saved without the one only saving and spiritual baptism; and seeing they received this, as Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost then falling on them, and seeing Peter himself evidently considered its so falling on them as the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and immediately, in the very next words, applied our Lord's promise to what then took place, through his ministry, saying, verse 16, "then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed, baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." I think all these facts and considerations, taken together, amount to a very full and strong confirmation, that the ministry of the gospel is a baptizing ministry, and that men did instrumentally baptize with the Holy Ghost. And this will assuredly be the case, as long as Christ continues to be with his ministers, and they thereby continue to preach the gospel; as it was preached in the primitive times,

times, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." And this (it is the unshaken faith of some) will be the case "even unto the end of the world: Amen."

THIS account of Peter's, respecting the baptism of Cornelius and his family with the Holy Ghost, through his ministry, is so connected and expressed by him, as to confirm his meaning, where, afterwards, he speaks of the baptism which now saves us; to be, that this saving baptism is the same by which Cornelius and his house were baptized, while he was delivering those words, by which the angel had said they should be saved. Peter knew no figure could save, any more than the "blood of bulls and of goats" could "take away sins;" and therefore, in telling what is the baptism which saves (which is several times already remarked) he also carefully shews us what it is not, lest his mention of the word water should draw such as were too outward in their views to trust in or continue the use of that which only puts away the outward filth of the flesh, or of the body. And his commanding Cornelius and his house to be baptized, no more proves he had a commission to baptize with water, than Paul's baptizing Crispus and Gaius proves he had a commission for it, which he declares he had not; nor yet a whit more than his circumcising Timothy, and purifying in the temple, and James' directing the sick to be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord, proves a divine commission for all these things. Had Paul given a circumstantial relation of his baptizing the few he did baptize in water, without mentioning that he was not sent to do it, or thanking God that he did it in so few instances, it had been as strong in favour of the practice, as any instances of its administration by the rest of the apostles. This he might have done, as well as others, though he was not sent to administer that baptism. And do not all see it would in reality have been no true support of the practice? Yet how eagerly would it have been claimed, as a support thereof, just as are the instances where others used it.



Now let us suppose they had all testified (and I can see no reason why they might not, as truly as Paul) that Christ sent them not so to baptize; that they did it in condescension, and thanked God that they did it no more; what then would become of all those instances, now so confidently urged as proof that a mere figurative immersion is the saving baptism of Jesus? They did divers things without commission, and yet do not expressly declare they were not sent to do them. Does their omission of such a declaration infer they had a commission? By no means. Neither does their not declaring they were not sent to administer elementary baptism, infer they had a commission for that. But, say many, Christ gave them a commission to baptize. Very true: and the minds of men looking outward for the meaning and accomplishment of many things that are inward and spiritual, has induced them mistakenly, among other instances, to understand a commission expressly to baptize into the eternal name, as meaning into water; and thus to retain as a gospel ordinance, a mere figurative, preparatory, decreasing and terminating institution. Some think it must have been by divine commission that the apostles baptized in water, because it was in the name of the Lord. But we see the anointing of the sick with oil, was also in the name of the Lord. And yet I know of none who now hold to a divine commission for this practice. But we may take notice, that neither this, nor water baptism, "was into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." No, there is not one instance of this form of words in all the Bible, in the use of water, which surely we may conclude would have been the case, had the commission designed an outward dipping; for, in that case, that must have been the ordained form of words; but as water was not meant, the commission contains no form of words at all to be used in baptism; but the words into the name, &c. express the very nature, power, and divine efficacy of the baptism they were to administer. It was not their own, it was not John's, it was not water,  
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it was not any thing that they could administer at any other time, than when specially "endued with power from on high;" and therefore this they were to wait for, and were promised to receive, as their qualification, from him who has all power.

Now he who had all power, was "Lord even of the Sabbath day," Mat. xii. 8. and just as much Lord of every other sign, and has equally fulfilled them all, and redeemed his people from every yoke of mere ceremonial observations?—for he was made of a woman, "made under the law," Gal. iv. 4.—And if Christ was made under the law, surely John was also under it, as I have before advanced; nor was it ever totally abolished even as a law of carnal or outward ordinances, till Christ rose from the dead.—And this holds good inwardly with the true Christian traveller in his own experience—"he that hath an ear, let him hear."

BUT as John was under the law (though advanced near to the kingdom) Christ has, in redeeming his people from all ceremonials of the law, also redeemed them from water baptism, which indeed was frequently in some sort practised under the law, long before John; as appears by the very precepts of the law—and which is allowed by the author of the "plain account" before mentioned; for, speaking of baptism in the days of the apostles, he says, "the principal scene of baptism lay in a country where immersion was quite familiar, and must, by the very laws of their religion, come into daily use through all parts of the land," p. 29. Baptism in water being therefore a ceremonial of the law, was, though differently used by John, completely ended, with every other ceremony thereof, when Jesus rose triumphant from the grave, led captivity captive, and gave spiritual gifts unto men. And when he rises so in us, and completely puts all things under him, in our souls, we shall all find there are no signs or symbols in the gospel, as standing ordinances thereof.—John's using water baptism a little differently from

what had been usual before, made no difference as to its perpetuity, though that difference might have taught the Jews, had their ears been open enough to have heard it aright, that he who was coming after him would make great alterations, and remove those things that could be shaken, that those only which could not be shaken might remain.—There is abundant evidence in scripture, that Christ never intended to incorporate any of the old rituals into his pure religion and worship.—Thus he taught the woman of Samaria, at the well, that the true worship was inward, “in spirit and in truth,”—and turned her mind from outward water to the inward, John iv. And when John’s disciples came to him, saying, “why do we and the pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?” Mat. ix. 14. he first shews the time of mourning is not while the bridegroom’s comforting presence is enjoyed; but that, when he was taken from them, then they would fast: which shews the fast he meant was inward.—And, in the next place, to shew the impropriety of uniting the ceremonials of the law, as outward fasts, washings, &c. with the gospel, the life, the substance—he tells them, “no man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment,” &c. “neither do men put new wine into old bottles,” &c. plainly inculcating, that his gospel was the new and living way—his new cloth, the robe of pure righteousness—the garment of salvation; his new wine, the wine he drinks new with his chosen, in his Father’s inward and spiritual kingdom—and therefore is put only into the new bottles, the hearts of the sanctified; that so their hearts might be animated, and rejoice in his salvation, out of all formality and ritual observances; for that he was not come, with his new wine, to supply the old bottles of law ceremonies, or animate therewith the vanishing dispensation of types and shadows,—nor with his new cloth, to patch up the old garment of those “carnal ordinances,” imposed on them until the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 10. which was only “a figure for the time then present,” v. 9. Nay, verily, this was not his intention;—not the design

design of the Father in sending him—he came to abolish all these, and so to bring in everlasting righteousness; and which, wherever it is compleatly brought in, entirely supercedes the necessity of all these outward ordinances, and abolishes them forever.

It is further observable, that Christ's directions about fasting, point plainly to that which is inward, and wherein those who fast according to them "appear not unto men to fast," Mat. vi. 18. Indeed, it being his peculiar office to fulfil and abolish the ceremonial observances, I believe we shall find, by a careful and illuminated perusal of all his parables and discourses, that he never on any occasion expressed any thing for the perpetuation of outward signs, but, on the contrary, very repeatedly, and on almost every occasion that furnished proper opportunity, pointed out, though often times very obscurely, at least to this world's wisdom, the unceremonious and purely spiritual nature of his kingdom.—But these are things which "the vulture's eye" (though very prying) "hath not seen," Job xxviii. 7. They are only "spiritually discerned." The natural man (with all his talk of Christ and gospel ordinances) cannot know them. See 1 Cor. ii. 14.



## CHAP. VI.

All baptized with Christ's baptism are members of his church, and none else. Six queries; which, rightly answered, will determine which is Christ's baptism. Divers other queries. Paul's care to avoid running in vain; hence he omits open proclamation against circumcision, at Jerusalem, though he had preached against it among Gentiles. Not strange, then, John's baptism was still in vogue. The TWELVE baptized only by John, in water. They could administer John's, without the power they were to wait for to administer Christ's. Putting on Christ in baptism, is putting on the armour of light. The word for teach in the commission, not the common word didasko, but matheteuo, to disciple, instruct into the kingdom of heaven. Sprinklers and dippers both greatly err, about Israel's baptism in the cloud and sea. It supports neither. "Plain account" corrected in this respect. The author of it allows the disciples' use of water baptism, during Christ's ministry on earth, was the same as John's. It is the soul needs purgation. Water cannot do it. Divers texts shewing plainly the name is often used for the life, presence, power of the Lord.

**T**HERE is a baptism by which every member is initiated into the body of Christ. As sure as any are thus baptized, they are members of Christ.—If any are not thus baptized, they are not of Christ's church.

Now, Query 1. What is the baptism, without which none can be members of Christ's church—and which none can be baptized with, but they immediately become members?

**QUERY 2.** Are all sure to be members of Christ's true church, who are baptized in water?

QUERY

**QUERY 3.** Has Christ two baptisms? See Eph. iv. 5. "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No more two gospel baptisms than two Lords, and two faiths.

**QUERY 4.** Does not Paul plainly say, "by one spirit we are all baptized into one body—and have been all made to drink into one spirit?" 1 Cor. xii. 13.

**QUERY 5.** Can any other but this, which baptizeth into the one body of Christ, be the one initiatory and saving baptism of Christ?

**QUERY 6.** Can that be the one baptism of Christ, which thousands may be baptized with, and yet not become members of his true church, but remain in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity?

**I THINK** these six queries, rightly answered, will determine which is the one initiatory and saving baptism of Christ in the gospel. Is it not strange that men do not see it?—Why do they stick in the practices of the apostles so rigidly, in regard to John's baptism and the supper, and so easily get over divers other of their practices?—Would it not have been a strange and almost unheard-of thing, had those famous institutions dropt into disuse all of a sudden?—Could it possibly have been borne?—Do we not always find it much easier to bring people by degrees to reject old venerated laws and customs, and adopt new ones, than to rush on and enforce them all at once?—Is not God a God of condescension and tenderness?—Did he not anciently lead his people Israel, after he brought them out of Egypt, purposely a different way from the nearest, lest they should meet with discouragements, and return back to Egypt? Exod. xiii. 17.—Would he not at least allow his apostles to exercise condescension, and go in and out before the primitive believers, as they could bear it?—Was not this evidently the case on divers other occasions?—Did not Paul, in communicating to the brethren at Jerusalem how it was that he preached the gospel

gospel among the Gentiles, to wit, void of ceremonies, and without circumcision, do it privately, to such only as were grown in the truth, and able to see the propriety of it, and to understand that the gospel has no such outward observations? Gal. ii. 2.—Does he not say, that this his care to avoid a general communication to all was, “left he should run, or had run in vain?”—Might it not have been wholly in vain for Paul to attempt benefiting the believers that were of the circumcision at Jerusalem, if he had bluntly at first declared off hand, that circumcision was abolished?—And was not this about the year of our Lord fifty-two, and about the seventeenth year of Paul’s apostleship.

Is it strange, then, that he had to circumcise Timothy, purify in the temple, &c. on account of the wrong zeal and attachments of the Jews, seeing so late in the day circumcision so far maintained its ground, that he had probably run in vain, if he had not avoided an open declaration of its being no gospel ordinance?—And is it any stranger, that John’s baptism should be in too high estimation to be easily laid aside at once? Is water baptism once called Christ’s in all the Bible? Is it once called a gospel ordinance? Did Christ ever practise it? Was John’s baptism Christ’s? If not, were Christ’s twelve disciples ever baptized with Christ’s baptism, or not? If Christ’s is water, and yet not the same of John’s who baptized these apostles, seeing Jesus baptized none in water? And we never read of the apostles being baptized therein by any but John. I have often mentioned, that the design of water baptism was, that Christ and his baptism might be made manifest to Israel: and this was fully done to the apostles, as to his outward coming, they needed no more water baptism; and it seems pretty evident they had no more than was administered to them by John.—But if the commission, Mat. xxviii. 19. was water, and different from John’s, why were they not baptized with it themselves, before they went forth to baptize others? Is it not plain, that that commission, as then verbally delivered,

vered, did not qualify them with power to administer the baptism mentioned in it? Were they not to wait for "power from on high?" Were they ever able to administer that baptism, till they were first baptized with the Holy Ghost themselves?—Is not this a confirmation that, as they had first received and then oft administered John's baptism before, without this more powerful enduement and qualification, but could not administer Christ's without it, that Christ's was quite a different thing from John's, and out of their reach or ability to communicate, but as it was poured upon them from on high, and flowed through them upon others? "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments: as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore," Ps. cxxxiii. Is there nothing in the descending of this precious ointment, even down to the very skirts of the garment, in likeness of the living unity of the brethren, like dew on Mount Hermon, and like the Lord's blessing on Mount Zion, that they may give us some idea of the communication of the Holy Ghost, through the baptized apostles, to and upon the souls of the people?—And is not this the one plain reason why they could not administer Christ's baptism till livingly baptized themselves, as the oil could not descend to the skirts till it was poured upon the head of Aaron?—And let it be once for all seriously considered—ought we not to hold it as a certainty that if the baptism in the commission had been water, the apostles would have been first baptized with it themselves? Or can we suppose their having been baptized with John's baptism, by John, before they became Christ's disciples, sufficient to authorize them to administer Christ's? But even though this were granted, will any say the apostles never received Christian baptism themselves? If Christ's is water, and yet not John's, how could it possibly be dispensed



pensed with, in the case of the apostles—in the case of Apollos, and the many which Paul taught, and begat unto God, but did not baptize in water?—We read of none sent expressly to baptize in water, but John. If then, Christ's baptism had been with water, and yet not the same with John's, ought not Christ himself to have baptized his disciples with it, before he sent them to baptize others, seeing we have no account of any other but himself, that had any authority to administer his baptism, till first baptized with it by him?—Who among the sons of men had a right to administer his baptism, before they were baptized with it themselves? If none had a right so to do, then if his was with water, and yet different from John's, is it not certain that his apostles never received it, seeing "Jesus himself baptized not" with water, and none else had any right to administer his baptism, till themselves were baptized with it?—Does it not, therefore, plainly appear, that there is no other baptism with outward water but John's? And did not Jesus himself wholly avoid baptizing any in water, on purpose that it might plainly appear that there is another? Or if there is any other with water but John's, when, where, and by whom did it begin?—Who first dared to administer it? Would it now be thought lawful among the Baptists for any to administer the baptism of water, who had not received it? And would it not have been very arrogating for any one in that day to have intruded himself into the office of an administrator of Christ's baptism, who had never himself received it? Or, had any so done, how would that convey a right to those by such an one baptized, to baptize others? I think we have all the reason we have a right to desire to conclude, if Christ had ordained water baptism, he would have administered it to those he had sent to administer it to others. And I rest firmly persuaded he never did ordain it, but that all the water baptism now practised among Christians is derived from John, or else is altogether unauthorized in the New Testament. And why do those who now use it, use a form of words never once used by any of the apostles?

apostles? If they say Christ commanded it, then why did not his apostles obey his command? Is not this another strong evidence that they were not commanded any form of words at all, nor any use of water, but that the words, into the name, &c. as plainly shew into what they were to baptize, as water would have been plainly shewn, had the commission been expressly to baptize into water?

It is urged by some, that putting on Christ, which all do who are baptized into him, Gal. iii. 27, is giving up their names to Christ in water baptism: but of those baptized into Christ, in the apostle's sense, he here declares, "ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," 28, 29, that is, real heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This certainly is not true of as many as are baptized into water, though it certainly is true of as many as are baptized into Christ. Putting on Christ is therefore plainly thus, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 14, that is, "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light," v. 12. This is directly baptism into the name, for "God is light," and Christ is light; and putting on the whole armour of light, is truly putting on Christ in baptism. And it is very strikingly observable, that divers texts speak expressly of baptism into Christ; thus preserving the very intent and tenor of the commission; for as all the fulness of the God-head dwelleth in him, and as these texts express baptism positively as being into him, and verbally in his name, as was the case constantly when water was used, it is as evident as any thing can well be, that this baptism into him, is really putting on him, the life, the substance, the whole armour of light—and that this answers the commission exactly, being into the name, the life, the power, the eternal virtue itself; and not into water, or any thing else, merely and verbally in the name.—I think this meaning of the words, into the name,

name, &c. is much confirmed by a passage in the fore-mentioned "plain account." The author pleads wholly for immersion of adults in water; and to maintain it against sprinkling of infants, he says, p. 43, 44, "the word in Matthew, rendered teach, is not the word commonly rendered teach in the New Testament. The word commonly used is DIDASKO, which occurs very often; but the other word, MATHETEUO, teach, in the baptismal commission of Matthew, is used only three times more in all the New Testament, Mat. xiii. 52, every scribe WHICH IS INSTRUCTED into the kingdom of heaven. Mat. xxvii. 57, Joseph, who also himself was JESUS' DISCIPLE. Acts xiv, 21, when they had preached the gospel to that city, and HAD TAUGHT many. They did not (says he) barely preach the gospel, but taught so effectually, as to prevail on many to become disciples or believers. This is the plain import of the original."

Does not this make strongly in favour of the Quakers' doctrine? Does it not shew the teaching, mentioned in this great commission, was to be with divine power, and to prevail effectually to discipleship?—Was not this the reason they were commanded to wait to be endued with power from on high, because they were now far otherwise to baptize people than they had done before? They were now to disciple them; that is, teach them so livingly and effectually, as truly to baptize them into the name, &c. Why else was this word MATHETEUEO used here, to express this peculiar kind of powerful, discipling, or baptismal teaching? a word used but three times more, as this author himself says, in all the New Testament.—He further says in the same page, that this word "implies teaching full as much as the more common word DIDASKO. The difference is, that the former has a more precise and determinate meaning, conveying to the apostles this idea, viz. "so teach the people as to persuade them to become my disciples."

Now

Now, serious reader, seeing this passage does mean teaching, but at the same time is so very precise and determinate in its meaning, as to convey a clear idea of great difference from the simple common meaning of the word teach, plainly signifying to make disciples by teaching, that is, to teach or disciple all nations, baptizing them; let us see how the three other passages, where it is used, will concur with the doctrine of baptism into the name, &c. The first is Mat. xiii. 52. "every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven."—This is the same word that is rendered teach in the commission: and here the scribe is instructed, taught or disciplined into the kingdom of heaven.—I think this is the very baptism enjoined in that commission: it is into the very life and substance intended by the name, to wit, the life, strength and virtue of the kingdom; the strong tower of safety, which the name of the Lord ever is to the righteous, the well instructed or truly disciplined scribe. And we see this scribe is initiated into the kingdom by teaching, and that the very teaching, discipling, or instructing, which is enjoined in the commission, and which therefore required power from on high to perform, because it was very different and much more effectual teaching (as this author maintains) than that expressed by the common word DIDASKO, teach. The second passage is Mat. xxvii. 57, "Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple." It seems plainly this; he had been taught, instructed, disciplined, in this more powerful way of teaching than that meant by the other word didasko; that is, he was a scribe well instructed into the kingdom of heaven—or baptized into the eternal holy name, which is the same thing; for none can be a disciple of Christ without his saving baptism.

THE third passage is Acts xiv. 21, "when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many"—that is, according to this author's own words, "taught so effectually as to prevail on many to become disciples." "This (he adds) is the plain import of the original."



Then, it seems, they taught them just according to the commission; and by which teaching they must have been baptized into the name; or (which is the same thing) instructed or disciplined into the kingdom.—But this sensible author adds further, “the common appellation of Christian believers occurring in very numerous passages of the New Testament, is *MATHETAI*, disciples. “As this” (says he) “is the usual name of believers in Christ, we have the verb of it in our Lord’s commission, where he bids his followers to go and make converts to him throughout the world; and, p. 45, he quotes “Whitby’s note on Mat. xxviii. 19,” that is on the very commission itself—saying, I desire any one to tell me how the apostles could *matbeteuin*, make a disciple of an heathen, or unbelieving Jew, without being *matbetai*, or teachers of them.”—By all which it is clear, that both the learned Whitby, and this learned author, were sensible that this extraordinary kind of teaching was making disciples of Christ, believers in and real living converts to him; and it is certain none are such without baptism into him—his disciples, all true believers, all his sincere converts, throughout the world, are baptized by the one spirit into one body; they drink all into one spirit, and are thus initiated, as well instructed scribes, into the kingdom of heaven.—Is it not marvellous that this writer was not, by the time he had seen and written thus much, so far instructed into it himself as to have seen with equal clearness, that no part of all this had any thing to do with the elementary water?—He maintains that the word *baptizo* always means immersion or bathing all over in water; and rejects the sprinklers notions respecting 1 Cor. x. 2, “and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.” The sprinklers idea on this passage he represents thus, p. 28, “the cloud which hung over the children of Israel is a watery substance, sprinkling its water in drops. The sea which was as a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left, by force of the strong wind which blew, sent forth a great spray or sprinkling. So they were plentifully sprinkled by the cloud above, and by the

the waters on each side." This he cannot agree to. Let us see how he understands it, and whether he mends the matter. He thinks " a man of plain sense, not thinking of this cloud or pillar of fire, dropping down water, but of opinion—that the baptism of scripture is immersion, would be apt to carry his thoughts no further than to apprehend here is an allusion to the custom of immersion ; the Israelites being, as it were, covered with the cloud over, and the waters on each side of them." Thus they stumble on every hand, who are vainly contending for the figures. His remark is very just, that a man of plain sense would not think of drops of water from a pillar of fire : and methinks it requires a little more than plain sense to understand immersion all over in water from this passage ; but though a man " of opinion that the baptism of scripture is immersion," might be very likely to stop short of the substance, and apprehend nothing further than an " allusion to the custom of immersion ;" yet I do not see why a man of real plain sense may not query how a pillar of fire can represent immersion in water ? Or how going through the sea on dry land, as a firm foundation, points out bathing all over in that fluctuating, unstable element ? The apostle in this passage expressly declares, they eat the same spiritual meat, and that they drink of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Hence it appears, they ate and drank the very substance which the saints in all ages, live by. This indeed they must have eaten, or else have had no divine life in them. Eating the outward emblems of it never gave life divine to the soul, any more than outward baptism. Their eating outward manna, and drinking outward water, from the rock, could never make their souls alive to God, and was but typical of that " spiritual meat" which they also and as truly ate, as they did the outward : and of " that spiritual rock whereof they drank ; for that rock was Christ." And why may not plain sense look a little further than to an " allusion to the custom of immersion" for the substance of their baptism, as well as for

the substance of their eating and drinking? For seeing they did truly feed in greater or less degree on Christ in spirit, as well as on outward manna, &c. and so enjoyed something of the very life and substance of the Lord's supper; why may we not believe they were in degree substantially baptized into the fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death, as well as into those deep outward trials and afflictions, so pressingly experienced by them, whilst conducted by the pillar of fire, and whilst pursued by their enemies at and into the midst of the red sea? And thus the word *baptizo* may answer as well to plunging into fiery trials, as into water.

OUR Saviour says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished," Luke xii. 50. And can it be doubted that those who really fed on Christ in spirit, in that day, were in degree truly baptized with him into sufferings, and in some degree at least buried with him into death? In this way I think we may see something further in their baptism than outward immersion, and thus rescue the pillar of fire from either dropping down water, or importing immersion into it; and indeed there seems little or no sense in this passage understood as speaking of either; for suppose we understand with the plain account "an allusion to the custom of immersion," it then amounts to this—immersion in water is a figure of purification—and Israel's passage through the sea is a figure of that figure; or that the apostle, in his assertion here, that they were baptized, only had an allusion to that figure. Now if it was nothing but a figure of a figure, I see not how he could positively in truth say, they were baptized.—Either they were, or were not—if they were properly baptized, it was inward or outward; if it was outward, and a proper water baptism, then either dipping, sprinkling, or any thing that has a little resemblance and will bear an "allusion to the custom of immersion," may, for aught I can perceive, be called baptism. Why then contend so long and loud about the precise mode of it? If Paul meant as he said,  
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that they were baptized, I think he must mean spiritually : but if any will have it mean outward water baptism, do they not at once introduce a third kind, or a third mode of it, different from either immersion or sprinkling? At any rate, and turn it every way, will not the result be, either that Paul did not mean as he said, that they really were baptized, but only that their passage resembled baptism, and may bear an allusion to it, or that he meant an outward baptism, without either dipping or sprinkling, or that he meant an inward and spiritual baptism? The two first meanings I should suppose most if not all would, on due consideration, reject—the last I am confirmed is, as before evinced, the genuine meaning of the apostle. He is here pressing it upon the once livingly baptized among the Corinthians, to hold out to the end. A few verses before (see the preceding chapter, 1 Cor. ix. 24) he says, “so run that ye may obtain;” 25th, “every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. 26th, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; 27th, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.” Here he urges his own subjection, and the temperance of others, as examples; and then to enforce the caution, impress the danger of their falling short, and if possible prevent their becoming cast-aways, he pertinently reminds them how it fared with some of the ancient fathers who came out of Egypt with Moses; and who, though they had partaken of the true spiritual baptism, meat and drink of the saints, yet afterwards (such is the weakness and danger of man) they lusted after evil things—murmured—tempted God—committed idolatry and fornication—and so were overthrown in the wilderness.—And in full confirmation that his aim in all this was to warn the Corinthians, he declares, “these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,” nor tempt Christ, nor mur-



mur, &c. as they did; and strikingly adds, "wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," v. 12. Perhaps all will agree, that those thus warned by Paul had received Christian baptism, whether it be agreed or not what that was; and if Christians were in all that great danger of falling, after the example of unbelief and apostacy here exhibited by him, and if this example was pertinent to their state and danger, does not that pertinency consist much in the Israelites having known a good degree of that which is saving, and turning from it? Nehemiah testifies, that the Lord saw their affliction in Egypt, and heard their cry by the red sea, and gave also his good Spirit to instruct them, Neh. ix. 9, 20. God was so near and attentive to them, that he not only led them by; he even went himself before them in the pillar of cloud and of fire.

LET none therefore marvel that Paul says they were baptized in the cloud, seeing that holy presence was actually there, into which all the spiritual Israel are baptized.—Moses tells them, Deut. v. 4, "the Lord talked with you face to face"—and Isaiah calls them the ransomed, testifying, li. 10, that the Lord "made the depth of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over."—But in regard to their passage through the sea, it is evident the cloud was not over them, but behind them.—It had gone before them; but just before their going through, we read, "the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them," Exod. xiv. 19. So that unless immersion all over into and under water, or at least an illusion to it, can be gathered from their going through the sea as on dry ground, with a cloudy and fiery pillar behind them, I cannot see any thing more in it for immersion, than for sprinkling; and in fact it appears to have nothing to do with either.

THIS author says, p. 41, " the disciples of Christ, during his ministry on earth, as well as the disciples of John, were very well acquainted with the institution of baptism;" and agrees with Whitby, that " they only baptized, as John had done, into the faith of the Messiah which was to come, and with that baptism of repentance, which prepared the Jews for the reception of his kingdom." By this it is conceded, that during Christ's ministry on earth, that baptism which his disciples used was the same as John's. No wonder then Christ never used it himself; and as he never once used it either before or after his resurrection, as we do not find his twelve apostles were ever baptized in water, but only into John's baptism, as before noticed, it seems clear to me, that Christ's commission does not contain water baptism.—His injunction to teach the people all things that he had commanded them, includes no such observation; for he had not commanded it; nor does it appear that the disciples ever used it, after Christ gave them this commission, in any wise as a different ordinance from what it had been before. If it was John's, and used by them as his before, it was afterwards but a continuation of the same ordinance. It no where in all the Bible appears to be an ordinance of Christ; but having been in great veneration, was indulgently continued through weakness, even after the resurrection.

NOTHING can be gospel baptism, that is not saving: it is the soul that needs purgation; the baptism which effects this, cannot be that which is merely with elementary water; but must be that which burns up the filth, and removes the defilement; that is, the baptism into the name, the life, the cleansing virtue of the divine nature.—Christ's baptism is ever described as saving, and none were ever saved without it. We all know that baptism into water may be received by such as are not in any degree saved; and I think, if we exercise but the common reason of mankind, we must see, that if water baptism were saving, it were a miracle, and that as oft repeated as it proved saving, even as truly a miracle

miracle as the turning water into wine ; for there is nothing in a bare washing in outward water, that has any more effect towards an inward cleansing, than there is in anointing with oil, or shaving off the hair. If therefore it were the baptism of Christ, it must either be a standing miraculous purification of souls by outward application, or a thing not saving ; but the baptism of Christ is that which now saves us, and is in its own nature and operation as truly and constantly saving to the soul, as washing in water is cleansing to the body. In proportion to the degree in which the body is washed in water, it is cleansed by the outward putting away the filth of the flesh ; and in proportion to the degree in which any soul experienceth the baptism of Christ, it infallibly produceth inward sanctification, by putting away the filth of the spirit. That name into which all the saints are baptized is such, that their baptism into it must purify. Purification is the very thing itself, and that is the one plain reason why it not only is, but must be, a baptism into the holy name : “ for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,” Acts iv. 12. It is truly by the name, that we are saved ; for that we are saved ; for this divine and living “ name is as ointment poured forth,” Cant. i. 3. This is the “ unction from the holy one,” 1 John ii. 20. “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe,” Prov. xviii. 10. Well may they be safe in this name, seeing the baptism into it is ever saving.

DEEPLY sensible that there was no other salvation, the Psalmist prays, liv. 1, “ save me, O God, by thy name ;” and Jeremiah says, x. 6, “ thy name is great in might.” Indeed his name is the strength and salvation of his people ; none can run into his name, or be gathered into it, or baptized into it, but they must at the same time be gathered and baptized into him.—Hence the scripture phrase, “ baptized into Christ ;” and hence also the absolute certainty that where two or  
three

three are gathered into his name, there he is in the midst of them. See *Mat. xviii. 20.* He doth not simply promise that he will be; he declares "there am I in the midst of them;" for he knew none could gather into his name, where he himself was not. The Greek word, truly translated, is into; the same word used in Christ's baptismal commission, and with great propriety; for none can be gathered into him who are not baptized into him—neither gathering in his name, nor baptism it, professionally availeth.—The promise of salvation is sure to none but those who are truly gathered and baptized into the name itself: and to these it cannot fail; for the name has all healing virtue in it. "Holy Father" (says Christ) "keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are," *John xvii. 11.* "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name," *12.* If ye shall ask any thing" (says he) "in my name, I will do it," *xiv. 14.* This can never fail, any more than salvation can fail to such as are truly and thoroughly baptized into his name; for as this baptism is salvation, so asking in his name is in his own life, spirit and power, and he cannot deny himself. As the Father always hears him, because his asking in his the Father's life and power; so he always hears and cannot avoid hearing, all who ask in his name, for the one plain and all sufficient reason, that his name is his life and spirit, his power and presence; and all done in it, is done to purpose; for therein there is no lack—therein is fulness, and divine sufficiency. We are complete therein for ever, without any of the signs or symbols of former dispensations.



## CHAP. VII.

*Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Colossians written purposely to dissuade from attachment to shadowy ordinances. Circumcision, water baptism, &c. plainly superceded; and true Christians shewn to be complete in Christ without them. This the evident scope of these epistles. This chapter contains many quotations from, and remarks on them.*

SEVERAL of the epistles seem to have been written on purpose to dissuade from attachment to and retention of the rituals of shadowy dispensations. Paul having his knowledge of Christ by immediate revelation, knew the dispensation of figurative institutions was ended; and that Christians viewing lifeless signs as gospel ordinances, must powerfully divert and detain them from the living, saving substance: hence he pressingly invites to Christ, the life and substance, and warns against a continuance of ceremonials.—His epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, and a good deal of several others, are full to this purpose. Some troublesome persons had got in among the Galatians, insisting on circumcision, and the rites of the law; and had so influenced the believers, that this inspired apostle vehemently expostulates with them for being so easily shaken from grace (of itself sufficient for all) and turned to elementary observances, chap. i. 6, 7. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel.” But as rituals are not of the gospel, he immediately adds, “which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”—Indeed every attempt to establish ceremonial institutions as gospel ordinances, is directly an attempt to pervert the gospel, and frustrate its blessed design, that of superceding all those figurative observations. And on this ground he pronounces any one, even though it were himself and companions, or an angel from heaven, that

that should preach any other gospel than that already preached unto them, accursed, v. 18.—The gospel that Paul preached, was Christ within, the word nigh in the heart and in the mouth; which he expressly calls the righteousness which is of faith; and declares of this inward word, “that is, the word of faith which we preach.” See Rom. x. 6, 8.—A few words before he had declared, “Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Hence it is evident, that this inward word of faith, which he preached as nigh in the heart, &c. is that which supercedes and ends the signs and shadows of the law to true believers.

THE Israelites had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness (the inward righteousness of faith—Christ, the word in the heart) and going about to establish their own righteousness (in the figurative observances, the letter and ceremonies of the law, and creaturely performances) have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” See v. 2, 3. That he means by the righteousness of God, this inward living word in the heart, and by their not submitting to it, their non-subjection to the motions and teachings of it, is evident by the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. “But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise; say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead) but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach.” This will remain, through all ages, the one only gospel of life and salvation. It is Christ in man, and ends the types and shadows. Were it not Christ himself the divine and holy word in the soul, did it not unite the life of the soul with the life of God, and bring into subjection to him, dependence upon him, and action by him, it would never effect complete salvation; for until all this is witnessed,

nessed, God becomes not our "all in all." Though we have known Christ after the flesh (saith the apostle) yet now henceforth know him no more," 2 Cor. v. 16.—It was necessary he went away, as to his visible appearance in the flesh, that he might come again, or more fully in spirit abide with and comfort his for ever. This he promised, and performs it to every true believer, who rightly looks for him in spirit, not gazing up into heaven, watching for his outward coming, or seeking to know him after the flesh: unto all who thus inwardly look for him, he appears in them, where his kingdom is "without sin to salvation." See Heb. ix. 28. This final coming to judgment will be to thousands who look not for him, and will not be unto their salvation, but condemnation, to their shame and everlasting contempt; but his second coming is promised only unto them that look for him, and is to their salvation. And thus he did come to those he said should not taste of death till they saw the kingdom; for this is truly the coming of his kingdom on earth, to those who rightly wait and pray for it, and livingly experience it, which many then did; for says the apostle, Col. i. 13 "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Here Christ sitteth on the throne of the heart, in his inward kingdom; for Paul tells the Galatians that it had pleased God, who called him by his grace, "to reveal his Son in him." This entirely supercedes the occasion of signs, as eating, drinking, or the like, to keep him in remembrance. This inward revelation and knowledge of the Son, in man, the hope of his glory, was a mystery that had been hidden from ages and generations.—The mists of darkness, and their resting in the law of carnal commandments and ceremonies, had hid and veiled from their minds the clear knowledge of it: but the vail being done away in Christ to the saints, in that day, the apostle declares this mystery was "made manifest to them;"—and goes on to shew what is the very life, riches and glory of it; saying, "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery"

mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." See Col. i. 26, 27. There never was but one true life and substance of religion.—Hence though this mystery of Christ within was greatly hid to most men for ages, yet was it the very thing Moses referred Israel to of old. Deut. xxx. 14. "the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it." Here Moses preached the gospel : and Paul affirms it was preached to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. Indeed it must be so ; for Abraham saw Christ's day, rejoiced in it, and came in degree into the life of it, though not to the end of all the signs.—He not only saw it, as then to come in greater fulness and glory ; he knew it in himself ; for when the Jews said to Christ, "thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" he did not escape their dilemma by telling them, Abraham foresaw his day afar off. That was not the thing he aimed at : but he came directly to the ever important point, to the very life of the matter ; "verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 57, 58 : not I was ; for, as the holy word (the same that appears in the heart) he is the eternal *am*.—Abraham knew and enjoyed him as such, as the life and substance of the new covenant, "four hundred and thirty years" before the giving of the outward law.—This is the inward gospel which Paul learned by the revelation of Jesus Christ, Gal. i. 12,—by God's revealing his Son in him : had he not so learned it, but only taken it by report from others, though well authenticated, he might have preached up Jesus and the resurrection in word, with as much zeal as ever he had in the Jews religion, while he was so "exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers," v. 14, and yet never at all have preached the gospel of Christ, which ever is in itself (and is never preached but in) the power of God to salvation.

I MOURN that the preachers of our day so generally lay hold of the history of the gospel in the letter, out of the life and power of it—zealously urging and  
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using elementary observances, as ordinances of Christ, to the subversion of many souls from a close and single attention to the inward word of life; under which, for a season, they have been well exercised. Thus "the letter killeth," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The literal preaching of what is called the gospel, being out of the newness of life, leading into and landing in the ceremonials of religion, has slain its tens of thousands, even of such as have in degree begun in the spirit, and run well for a season; but by and by, through the influence of this lifeless ministry, have turned to and come under the shadows, and there rested from the further pursuit of their journey in the spirit, which they ought to have fervently prosecuted in the open light, and under the warmth and animating beams of the sun. Paul knew the danger of these things, and considered the attempts of those "false brethren" to continue the observance of outward ordinances, as directly tending to bring the believers "into bondage," Gal. ii. 4, and would not give place to them, "by subjection" (to such observances) "no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel" (says he) "might continue with you," v. 5. By the truth of the gospel, he means its pure and genuine simplicity, unfettered with signs and ceremonies; against the retention whereof he was so bold and faithful, that he declares he even withstood Peter "to the face," at Antioch, v. 11. and reproved him "before them all," for compelling the "Gentiles to live as do the Jews," 14; and especially, seeing he himself had, "before that certain came from James," eaten with, and lived "after the manner of the Gentiles."

AND then this great apostle pertinently inculcates, that even the believing Jews themselves could not be "justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," 16. It is evident he means, by the works of the law, the outward observances of it; for he is here expressly labouring against the continuance of these, as will yet further appear. The 3d chapter begins thus, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitch-

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ed you, that ye should not obey the truth?" the 2d and 3d verses query, "this only would I learn of you, received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" All true religion, in every age and nation, ever began in the spirit; and all that ever continued in true religion, continued in the spirit: and no man ever enjoyed any more of it than he enjoyed in the spirit. None ever were, or ever will be, "made perfect by the flesh;" by any thing man, as man, can do; nor receive the spirit by the works and observations of the law; though many are acting as if they thought they could not be complete in Christ alone, or be "made perfect" in and by his holy spirit, without the addition of "weak and beggarly elements." It seems the Galatians were of the same mind. They began in the spirit, but not being content to abide in it, advance forward in it, and depend singly upon it, they were seeking to be "made perfect," or completed in the work of religion, by ceremonial observations. Against this departure from a single reliance on that holy spirit which began the work, the apostle was zealously engaged, and declares, v. 11. "the just shall live by faith." What faith? The righteousness of that inward word of faith, which Paul preached "nigh in the heart and mouth." For there never was nor can be but one thing, through all time, that the just could or ever can live by; and that is this inward word of life, the spiritual flesh and blood of Christ. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," saith the blessed Jesus, John vi. 57; and he that eateth him not truly and substantially (how oft soever he eats the figures, and how loud soever he proclaims his faith) has "no life in him," 53. This is the tree of life, in the "midst of the paradise of God." This heals the nations of them that walk in the light of the lamb; and by this, and this only, they live unto God. Hence Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the

faith of the Son of God." Gal. ii. 20; that is, by the faith of Christ living in him. He was "dead to the law, that he might live unto God," 19. He renounces all mere legal, ceremonial righteousness, and comes home to Christ alive in his own soul. He mentions the "blessing of Abraham" as coming "on the Gentiles" only through "Jesus Christ" the life; and the receiving of "the promise of the spirit," only "through faith," chap. iii. 14. This is experimental religion, all standing in that faith which is "of the operation of God" in the soul, Col. ii. 12, and which is the very life and "substance of things hoped for," and therefore, and therefore only, it is also the sure and certain "evidence of things not seen." See Heb. xi. 1. Many strive hard to believe, and think they do believe; but no mere opinion, or simple credence, is the faith of the gospel. No other faith than that which is in its own nature the very "substance of the things hoped for," can be a sure and unshaken evidence of the eternal inheritance, the things not yet seen.

"To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He faith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect," Gal. iii. 16, 17. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," 29. Observe, reader, the covenant is confirmed only in Christ, the life, the word in the heart, the inward "hope of glory." The promise is to all that are Christ's, and to them only, God promised that in Abraham, and in his seed, Christ, all nations should be blessed. This "promise is sure to all the seed;" see Rom. iv. 16; to all that are "born again of God," begotten into sonship and joint heirship with Christ, by this "incorruptible seed, and word of God," in the heart. This alone is the true faith,

faith, wherein all the children of it "are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. It runs not in the outward blood, nor in the line of faith merely professional. It was never obtained by the observance of rituals: nor is it known but by a real baptism into death with Christ, and arising with him in the newness of life. "For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," v. 21. But as nothing can give divine life to the soul, but that which brings it into the life of the son, or the state of real sonship, by the union of the soul with the life of the holy word; and as all thus begotten and born of God, feel their dependence to be wholly on God their Father; their looking is wholly unto him for aid and protection. Hence this great apostle, chap. iv. v. 6, of this epistle, declares, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Here is the alone true life of faith in the soul. Here is divine reliance upon the Father. It is in the state of real sonship, the Emanuel state, where God and man unite in the heavenly fellowship, and substantial relationship. This is beyond all figurative observations. "The law made nothing perfect," but "was added because of transgressions."—But for how long? "till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made," chap. iii. 19. But if the law was added, because of transgressions, till the seed came, and John, the forerunner, to prepare his way, declares the axe must be laid to the root of the corrupt trees, till they are all "hewn down, and cast into the fire," and that the chaff must be burned up, and the floor thoroughly cleansed; how idle is it, for any to think of salvation by Christ, and that they are not under the law, but under grace, because they assent to the history of the gospel, and say they believe in Jesus, whilst living a life of sin, and continuing in transgression, the very thing for which "the law was added," and which the life, strength and authority of the moral precepts of it were and will be over, and therefore



over men, so far as in transgression, and sensible of it ; and so far they are and ever will be under the law, and not under the dominion and government of grace. For grace saveth ; and just so far as we are under it, we are saved from sin ; and so far as we are not saved from sin, we are not under grace. Christ never saves a soul in sin. Indeed, in the complete sense of the word salvation, he cannot. It is a contradiction in itself. It would be saved, and not saved. For salvation is from sin. Therefore it is said, " thou shalt call his name Jesus" (that is a saviour) " for he shall save his people from their sins," Mat. i. 21. The whole scope of the gospel is salvation from sin, and a new life in holiness, really and inherently so ; not merely imputatively. Mere imputation of Christ's righteousness, without the implantation of it, is a dangerous doctrine, indeed a real impossibility. Christ redeems from the shadows of the law, by bringing and uniting the soul to the substance ; and that may be the main reason why so few professed Christians are yet redeemed from them ; for none are any further truly redeemed, even from the shadows, than they are so by the life and possession of the substance. For as "circumcision is nothing," so simple "uncircumcision is nothing." But the living faith, the new creature, the substance, is all in all. Many think much of themselves, because they are baptized in water, partake of the bread and wine, &c. And many think much of themselves because they avoid them, and suppose they see beyond them. But even the latter is only a speculative or merely rational convincement, it is nothing : it is not the true and living redemption of Christ " from the rudiments of the world ;" for that never advances further or faster in any soul, than the soul advances in the knowledge and enjoyment of the substance. It is Christ himself, the seed, the life, the substance, that is the end of the law. And so, as none are truly redeemed from the shadows of it, but by and in the substance ; so none are redeemed from the curse of it, the penalty due for the transgressions of its moral precepts, until, nor a whit further than,

than, they know Christ, the seed, the substance, to finish sin, and make an end of transgression in them individually. For this is the only real destruction of the works of the devil, that Christ ever makes; and consequently, all the redemption from the curse, or penalty of the law, that men ever really do know—save the forgiveness and remission of sins already committed, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. So far, therefore, as we sin against God, we are not under grace, but at best under the law. Nor shall ever “one jot, or one tittle, pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” If any soul is not under the curse of it, but under grace, it is because Christ, the seed, redeems and preserves him from the state of transgression, on account of which it was added. And yet salvation is in no wise by the deeds of the law, but by Christ, who redeems, and liveth in us, and is our life, above and beyond the law. “Is the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid,” says the apostle, Gal. iii. 21. “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed,” 23. Before the word of faith is revealed in the heart, before the Son of God is revealed in men, as God revealed him in Paul, the law serves as a school-master; hence the apostle’s very next words, verse 24, are, “wherefore the law was our school-master, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Faith being the substance, as before shewn, “of things hoped for;” and being “of the operation of God” in man, the word nigh in the heart, which is the word of faith the apostles preached; when this was livingly known, in dominion over all in the soul, the use of the school-master was superceded: and this is the substantial experience of such as are risen with Christ, above the rudiments of the world, and the law of carnal commandments, in every age of the world. So the apostle’s next words are, v. 25, &c. “but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master. For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as  
have

have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Here the law is fulfilled, in putting "on the Lord Jesus Christ,"—"the whole armour of light;" casting "off the works of darkness," and making "no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," according to Rom. xiii. 12, 14. Well may this supercede the law, seeing this baptism into Christ, this putting him on, as the whole armour of light, so effectually redeems from the works of darkness, and the lusts of the flesh; agreeably also to Eph. vi. 11. "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

SOME will understand this baptism into Christ, to mean outward baptism. The author of the aforesaid "plain account" quotes Bishop Burnet, describing the primitive baptism in water, and saying, "from whence came the phrases of being baptized into Christ's death; of being buried with him by baptism into death; of our being risen with Christ; and of our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; of putting off the old man, and putting on the new?" page 30. Thus men, by attachments to rituals, are liable to have their minds veiled, from beholding the obviously inward and spiritual meaning of scripture, or at least turned to seek or suppose an outward signification, where none seems necessary or intended, but that which centers in the life and substance. Baptism into Christ, is into the name, the power and influence of the divinity, according to the commission. It is not true, that all who are baptized in water, "have put on Christ;" but only such as are actually baptized into Christ himself, the divine eternal substance; and therefore the apostle limits it to such only, by the words, "as many of us." Those who hold water baptism an essential, or as that which saves, or is the "one baptism," I suppose, hold that all the believers received it: but Paul speaks here of only as many as were absolutely baptized into Christ, not into water, verbally in his name, but into him, so as to put him on, by putting on his nature, life and disposition;

love,

love, meekness, temperance, and all those virtues pre-  
dominant in such in whom he lives and reigns, and  
against whom there is therefore no law: for it is by  
thus putting on Christ, and living in him, and he in  
us, our life, and hope of glory, in that wherein there  
is no transgression, that we are redeemed from the  
bondage, penalty, and rudiments, of the law, into  
the glorious liberty of the sons of God." This is  
the one gospel baptism. It is strictly into Christ, into  
his name, the saving name, of the Lord, the strong  
power of salvation and safety, the name that is as oint-  
ment poured forth; the saving, healing influences  
whereof make all the sincere virgins love him. The  
same baptism, with the same word, into, several times  
repeated, the apostle again mentions, Rom. vi. 3, 4,  
" So many of us," and he might have said only so  
many, and doubtless meant so, " as were baptized into  
Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore  
we are buried with him by baptism into death." Now  
see the fruits of it, which cannot result from baptism  
into water; " that like as Christ was raised up from  
the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also  
should walk in newness of life;" and, verse 5, " for  
if we have been planted together in the likeness of his  
death" (that is, into a real death to all sin, for his bap-  
tism thoroughly cleanses the floor of the heart) " we  
shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." This  
is what the apostle means by walking in newness of life;  
as is plain by the connexion, " for if," &c. Can any  
thing be plainer, than that this is all an inward and  
spiritual work; an actual baptism into real death unto  
sin, and arising into life with Christ (that then liveth  
in us) in his inward resurrection and glory in the soul?  
and hence the baptism that now saves us, not the put-  
ting away the filth of the outward flesh, but the an-  
swer of a good conscience towards God, is rightly, and  
ever with divine propriety, said to be " by the resur-  
rection of Jesus Christ." And now, to evince that this  
is all inward, and that this of being " planted together  
in the likeness of his death," in baptism, is not being  
dipped



dipped into water, but into a real death to sin; let us observe well, that the apostle declares positively, without any exception, that if we have been so planted "into the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," which certainly is not true of all that are baptized in water, though they may call that "the likeness of his death." For many have been so baptized, who have had no experience of this likeness of his resurrection, this walking in newness of life. Simon the sorcerer both believed (see how little a mere lifeless believing amounts to) and was so baptized; and yet he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; having neither part nor lot in the true Christian baptism, Acts viii. 13, 21, 23: which shews plainly, that our blessed Saviour's words in the commission, Mark xvi. 16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," relate wholly to that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and to that baptism which is truly into the likeness of Christ's death, into death unto sin, and a new life unto holiness, by the resurrection and the life of Christ in us, the hope of glory. And as this in Mark, is the same commission with that in Matthew, it further confirms that the baptism mentioned in both is that which is saving, and could not be that of water; since the promise is to him that believeth, and is baptized with it, that he "shall be saved." This promise is sure, for this baptism is into the name of the Lord, the strong tower, in which the righteous abiding, ever find safety, defence and preservation; while a bare dipping in water, professionally in the name, preserves none from evil.

BUT further, that Paul meant as above explained, by this planting, death, burial and resurrection, his very next words declare, v. 6, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." This is the death produced by the fiery baptism of Jesus, the crucifixion of our old corrupt man, the destruction of the body of sin in us. And is it not  
strange,

strange, that any real Christian should not understand this, seeing it is the very thing which John the Baptist (in direct contradistinction to the baptism of water) declares of Christ's, by the mention of the axe, fan, and fire, and the work effected by them, amounting to absolute purification? May these things be well laid to heart, by all who hope to be saved by a simple though hearty and sincere belief of facts, and immersion in outward water; for this is not the faith and the baptism to which the promise of salvation holds good for ever. And for any to use water, as gospel baptism, and not consider it saving, is to run counter to the design and express declaration of scripture in regard to the baptism of Jesus.

THE fourth chapter to the Galatians begins asserting, "that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world," v. 1, 2, 3. Here we see the son himself submitted to the elements, the signs and ceremonials, unto which also the children were in bondage for a season; and to prevent their continuance under which, the apostle was now zealously endeavouring, having seen clearly beyond them himself, and been a living witness of their abolition. By the next verses, it is clear, that Christ's submitting to these elementary things, and being made under the law, was so far from perpetuating outward, elementary baptism, or any other rituals, that it was purposely "to redeem them that were under the law." Why then should we, who never were under that law of carnal ordinances, nor yet under the dispensation of John's baptism (which was for Christ's manifestation to Israel) unless by our own voluntary act, desire to come into bondage to these things, called here by Paul "the elements of the world?" Those outward things were abundantly proved weak and insufficient, or the law under which they were enforced had remained to enforce

enforce them still. All figurative immersions, sprinklings, eatings and drinkings, are altogether as weak, insufficient and unavailing, now, as ever they were; and it is an evidence of human weakness to continue in, and desire to be in bondage to them; as much so, as was the attachment of the Galatians to circumcision, &c. Paul, thoroughly convinced of this weakness of all mere signs and symbolical observations, therefore pertinently, and as it were with amazement, queries, v. 9, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." 11, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon your labour in vain." And how many days and times are now appointed, and rigidly observed, even in our days? Set times and seasons, in man's will and wisdom, for fasting, prayers, thanksgivings, eating bread, and drinking wine, &c. And how much further a punctual conformity and observance, in these things, often goes towards conciliating the favour of men, and even of princes, than purity of life, integrity of conduct, and humanity towards all ranks of mankind, deserves serious consideration. And is it at all strange, that Paul, observing how great weight these weak things were obtaining, even among such as had really "known God," v. 9. (and who therefore had received that which was all-sufficient in itself, if lived in, and relied singly on, for salvation, and eternal life, without any elementary observations whatever) was really alarmed, and afraid lest his labours to establish them in the purity and truth of the gospel, should prove in vain? especially when those who had lately almost adored him, were so soon and so far infected with this zeal for ceremonials, as to give grounds for his query, v. 16, "am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Is it strange, that he calls the retrograde motion of such as had "known God" for themselves, from that inward knowledge, to outward rites, turning "again to the weak and beggarly elements?" In the next verse, 17, speaking of those

those who strove to bring them into this bondage to the elements, he says, " they zealously affect you, but not well ; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them." They were very zealous in their attempts to embondage them to the elements, as too many now are ; but this zeal was not well, but very ill ; for they went so far, it seems, as to attempt or desire to exclude such as were backward to conform, and come into this bondage, that by this exclusion they might be driven or prevailed on to affect them, or their doctrines and notions. This their zeal and labour was quite different from Paul's. He was for the life ; they, the letter. He for the substance ; they, the symbols. Do but hear him, v. 19, " My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." He knew " the letter killeth," and that zeal in the sign often obstructs the growth and formation of Christ, the substance, in the soul : so he travails as it were in birth again for their advancement and perfection in the latter. It would seem, by their being truly his " little children," and by his now travelling in birth again, that is, for the more complete growth and full formation of Christ in them, that they had been already in degree truly begotten and born of God : and that the apostle, in the labour he had before bestowed upon them, had already once travailed, as in birth, for and with them ; but that they, instead of rightly advancing in the travail, growth and full formation of Christ in themselves, unto the state of perfect men in him, " to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;" had been obstructed and diverted therefrom, by turning to " the weak and beggarly elements ;" and that therefore such was the apostle's good will to them, he was now again engaged in travail for their attainment of what was lacking in them ; the complete formation and growth of Christ, whose growth and increase of stature in man is gradual and progressive : as was the case in that prepared body, wherein he grew, and " increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," Luke ii. 52. And, to win them wholly to

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Christ,



Christ, and wean them from beggarly elements, Paul reasons with them in the following verses, from Abraham's two sons, "the one by a bond-maid" (representing this elementary bondage) "the other by a free woman," Gal. iv. 22; the first, "was born after the flesh;" the last, "by promise," 23: "which things" (saith he) "are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar," 24. "For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children," 25. "But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all," 26. And the few following verses declare believers to be, with Isaac, "children of the promise;" that the children of the flesh persecute these, as Ishmael did Isaac; that the son of the bond-woman was cast out, "for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free." And immediately upon these words the chapter concludes, "so then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free." And the next very pertinently begins, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Then instancing one particular rite, he declares, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;" that such as are so, are debtors to do the whole law; that Christ is become of no effect to those who seek to "be justified by the law;" and positively asserts of them, "ye are fallen from grace."

LITTLE do the zealous advocates for outward ordinances think how their attachment thereto hinders their real justification, by the true and living faith and grace of the gospel, even amidst all their talk of justification, by faith in Christ alone. Perhaps they never consider, that these foolish Galatians, with all their desires of bondage to the beggarly elements, might be as loud in profession of faith in Christ, and in their claim to justification by his blood, as any now are. I  
desire

desire to know (if it is so) why it is more impossible for a man circumcised to be profited by Christ, or why he is any more fallen from grace, than a man baptized in water? I cannot perceive that either circumcision or baptism prevents profit by Christ, any further than the mind is thereby turned from him, and from a single reliance upon the work of his grace in the heart for salvation; nor that either the one or the other, or any other outward performance, will ever fail to prevent it, so far as the mind is thereby turned away from an inward attention unto and firm dependence upon him who remains to be the resurrection and the life, in all true believers, the word nigh in the heart and mouth, for counsel, direction, and salvation. In so far as any ceremonial diverts the mind of one that has truly "known God" in himself, from attention to his inward appearance and work in the heart, such an one is so far "fallen from grace," and no further than he is so diverted. And I can see nothing in circumcision a whit more likely so to divert him, than in water baptism. One, as far as I can conceive, is just as likely to keep him from Christ, as the other. This may seem strange to many. But I think they can give no sound reason why one should be so hurtful, and the other so harmless, as they may imagine. Distinctions, however ill founded, when long settled in idea, seem real; but examined to the bottom, are found to have no existence but in speculation. And believing many distinctions of long standing among Christian professors are of this kind, I think I can truly say, I travail in spirit, if not in birth, for them, that they may dig deep for the foundation, and build on the sure rock of ages. Then their buildings will not fall, but stand all winds and weathers. It is much better patiently, with Paul (v. 5.) "through the Spirit, to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," than hastily to rush into bondage, v. 7. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?" 8. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you," 9. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This I firmly

believe is just the case with many, whom the Lord in these days calls, by his holy Spirit working in them. They give up to the call; begin, like the Galatians, in the Spirit; run well for a season. By and by, in steps the adversary of souls, or, by the art and address of some high in esteem with them, they are absolutely hindered from obeying the truth, in keeping singly to the Spirit they began in; and by a persuasion that cometh not from him that called and still calleth them to persevere on in the Spirit, they are diverted to the elements, take up a false rest in the shadows, and gradually, perhaps almost imperceptibly to themselves, depart from Christ, the inward life; and fall away from the lively influences of grace in their own souls, till the whole lump is leavened, with the leaven of the Pharisees; a fruitless, lifeless zeal in rituals, a round of creaturely devotions and performances; drawing near the Lord with the mouth, and seeming to honour him with the lip, whilst the heart is far from him. In order to prevent which, I think Paul's direction, v. 25, very pertinent and proper: "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." And so walking, I am persuaded lifeless forms will be forsaken, beggarly elements abandoned, old things done away, all things become new, all things of God, in spirit and in truth, in the newness of divine life: for I can never believe, that the Spirit not only lived in (as to what passed in the secret of the soul) but also diligently and strictly walked in (as to all our outward religious or devotional exercises) will fail to lead out of, or preserve from, every undue attachment to signs and ceremonials, or any thing that genders to bondage.

Now, notwithstanding the length of these quotations from the epistle to the endangered Galatians, and of the foregoing remarks, I am not easy to omit several passages to the Colossians; the epistle to them also being pointedly against subjection to ordinances.

PAUL was fervent in spirit, in prayers and desires for them, that they might be "fruitful in every good work;"

work;" increasing in the knowledge of God, and "filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding," chap. i. 9, 10: but was so far from pointing out water baptism, or any other mere ceremonial, as promotive of this happy experience, as pertaining to fruitfulness in every good work, or as being included in the word every in this sentence, or at all belonging to those purely spiritual things, wherein he wished them an increased understanding; that he plainly points out the fulness and sufficiency of Christ, without them; and warns the Colossians of their danger of being beguiled with enticing words from the simplicity of the gospel. In leading on, and preparing their minds for a single dependence on Christ alone, the living substance, and for the rejection of all that is not Christ, nor in, nor of, his life in religion, he tells them it is he, v. 14, "in whom we have redemption:" that he is, v. 15, "the image of the invisible God;" yea, "the first born of every creature." 16, That "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible." 17, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." 18, That "he is the head of the body, the church:" that he is "the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." And 19, that "it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." This was a good foundation; for having him actually living in us, in whom all fulness dwells, and he being truly our life, we need no addition of ceremonials. Therefore, the apostle, drawing on, v. 23, towards the substance, which he wishes them to continue "grounded and settled" in the faith of, not being "moved from the hope of the gospel," he comes, 26, 27, 28, to the very thing itself; "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;" which he expressly says (as before noted) "is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning every man," &c.



OBSERVE, reader, we before saw that "the word of faith, which the apostles preached," was the "word nigh in the mouth, and in the heart," as Paul plainly testifies, Rom. x. 8. And here, in full confirmation of the same great truth, the same gospel salvation, we find the same apostle declares the Christ, the gospel, yea, the very "riches of the glory of this mystery," of life and salvation, "among the Gentiles," which they the apostles preached, "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is that "hope of the gospel," which a few verses before he wished they might not be "moved away from." And to keep them to this, and from ritual observances, his labour was fervent among them, "striving according" to the working of Christ in him, "which" (faith he, v. 29) "worketh in me mightily." And this his fervent labour and striving with them, preaching "Christ in them," as the substantial hope of glory, "warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom," was expressly in order, 28, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" where all perfection in the divine life centres; where God and man are reconciled in the heavenly union; where "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;" and signs are superceded. This was Paul's aim, his scope and exercise, in this epistle. In the beginning of the next chapter, he manifests great care or conflict for them, that "their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery" (he had spoken of) "of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom" (says he) "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Thus he lays, or proposes, a sure foundation, on the all-sufficiency whereon both he and they might safely depend; and that without aid or addition from things which may and must be shaken, in order that that alone which cannot be shaken may remain. For this alone is to remain in the fulness of the gospel state; and surely no ceremonials are the things which cannot be shaken. That this was Paul's aim,

aim, in the foregoing expressions, I think we have his own authority to declare; for his next words are, v. 4, "and this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." And v. 6, he exhorts, "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him." 7, "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." And then comes on pointedly to warn them, and shew them the danger of trusting or being drawn away to any thing else but the riches, glory and sufficiency of the great mystery, wherein was all fulness for salvation: "beware" (says he, v. 8) "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (in the margin, elements) of the world, and not after Christ." Oh! the mischief of human philosophy, carnal reasonings, vain deceit, and the wisdom of this world, in the things of religion. It builds tabernacles for abolished ordinances, and leads thousands from Christ to the rudiments of the world; thereby spoiling them as to the increase of knowledge and stability in Christ, who is all-sufficient for and in his people; as the next words emphatically declare, v. 9, 10, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." The next verses shew, that neither circumcision nor outward baptism is at all necessary; so entirely complete we are in Christ, the inward and everlasting fulness and divine sufficiency. Do but read them. "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened, together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing

nailing it to his cross." What could Christ have done, or Paul have said, more fully to have shewn the abolition of ordinances? Even that of water baptism is as plainly here expunged and superceded, as circumcision. And it is marvellous to me, that men of sense, as the author of the forementioned "plain account," &c. with divers others, should be so veiled in their understandings, as to adduce this passage, and several more of somewhat a like import, in support of water baptism; when the manner of the apostle's bringing it in, just after warning them against the rudiments of the world, pointing out the fulness of Christ, the inward hope of glory, and declaring them complete in him, and then immediately shewing how they are complete in him, without any of those rudiments he had just warned them against, shews as plainly as sunshine, that their circumcision and their baptism were both in him, the one as much as the other. So that I desire the candid reader to turn to the passage, and read for himself. And I think he that can find argument in it for water baptism, may find as much for circumcision made with hands. But as the circumcision here is that made without hands, so also is the baptism. It is all spiritual; and, as the apostle words it, consists "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Almost exactly similar is what he says, Rom. vi. 6, speaking expressly of this inward and spiritual baptism "into Christ," and "into his death," being "buried with him by baptism into death," &c. The words are, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here the same apostle ascribes the same effect to spiritual baptism into Christ, as in the passage just mentioned, in the epistle to the Colossians, he ascribes to circumcision spiritually in him, the "putting off" or "destroying the body of the sins of the flesh." It must be a wrong philosophy, and vain deceit indeed, that can so wrest these plain testimonies of the apostle, as to draw elementary water from them for baptism.

IF circumcision here is inward, so is the baptism. If the baptism is outward, so is the circumcision. They are so joined together, that neither true wisdom, sound reason, nor common sense, can put them asunder, and make the one outward, and the other inward. And if the apostle here excludes outward circumcision, he equally excludes outward baptism. If he retains one, he retains both. But he retains neither. He clearly rejects both; and shews our circumcision and our baptism both complete in Christ, without hands, without a knife, or a single drop of elementary water. He plainly shews the believers not only "buried with him in baptism," but in the same baptism also "risen with him;" and that expressly "through the faith of the operation of God;" which is wholly an internal thing, the very "substance of things hoped for." And having shewn what the one saving baptism and circumcision is, he then with great pertinency exhibits Christ "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances," taking "it out of the way, nailing it to the cross," as of no further use to such as know him in the fellowship of his sufferings, and in the power of his resurrection; such as experience his fulness, and are circumcised, baptized, and complete in him. For these know his cross, and are crucified by it to the world, and to the rudiments, elements, and ordinances of it; and the world also is crucified unto them. There is no friendship between Christ and Belial; nor much between his disciples and the world. His religion does not suit the world. It is too simple, unpopular, unpompous, and too unceremonious; too much a death to self. And I am well satisfied that many, who are and have been livingly wrought upon by the power of God, and made to pant for divine support, have yet striven hard to save their life in self, in popularity, and in the friendship of this world; and from this disposition have shunned the cross; and tho' they have owned Christ, and chose to be "called by his name, to take away their reproach," they have still preferred to eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel; and, with  
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Nicodemus, to acknowledge and worship the blessed Jesus, in the dark signs and shadows of the night ; than openly to embrace the contempt of the cross, and confess him in the inward, unceremonious purity, spirituality, and simplicity, of the clear and genuine gospel day. Dipping under water, and calling that " buried with him by baptism into death," the spirit of the world, which still too much liveth in them, can more easily endure ; nay, is sometimes pleased and plumed with it. Far be it from me to think this of all who use this sign. I doubt not, even this is a real cross to some ; but I believe it is generally much more tolerable to the spirit and wisdom of the world, than the pure simplicity of the gospel ; the real death and burial with Christ, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and ceasing from man, and from their own creaturely activity in religion ; waiting on God, in absolute dependance, in nothingness of self, and the loss of all things : this is too hard for the spirit of the world. These are hard sayings to it ; who can bear them ? Hence many who walk with him awhile in the spirit, and run well for a season under the cross, grow weary of the sufferings and reproaches of Christ, turn away back, and walk no more with him ; but get into the " beggarly elements," and sit at ease in the friendship of the world, under a formal profession of religion ; very little conversant with the cross, to which they would know all these things nailed, if they rightly abode with Jesus ; and followed him in the regeneration. But as none reign with him, but those who suffer with him ; as none rise with him in the likeness of his resurrection, nor walk with him in newness of life, but those who are really, not ceremonially, planted with him in the likeness of his death ; as none sit with him in the throne of his kingdom and glory, but who drink of his cup, and are baptized with his baptism ; a remnant of true-hearted followers have chosen to suffer affliction with him, and follow him, where ever he leadeth, bearing his cross. These know " the hand-writing of ordinances nailed to it."

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Their blotting out, and removal, is a thing in familiar experience with them; not merely a matter of record in the letter of the scriptures, and thence gleaned up, and systemized in a lifeless creed, confession or profession of faith.

BUT let us follow the apostle a little further. The next verse shews Christ having "spoiled principalities and powers," and "openly triumphing over them." Then he enjoins upon the Colossians, the way being now quite cleared for it, "let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink" (are not the bread and wine here included, as we have seen circumcision and elementary baptism were a few verses before?) "or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath day." He goes very thorough in dismissal of ceremonials, and well he might; for his next words are, v. 17, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Therefore he adds, v. 18, &c. "let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things, which he hath not seen; vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men." He does not say, wherefore, if ye be dead and buried with Christ, by plunging into the elements or rudiments in water baptism; but, quite differently, "wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments," or, as the marginal reading has it, "from the elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" This home query should go to the heart of every observer of these outward ordinances, and beget a close examination, whether

whether their observance thereof, and subjection thereto, is not rather following after the traditions "and doctrines of men," in their unseasonable and unprofitable continuance in the abrogated institutions and ordinances of former dispensations—the rudiments which ought to be left behind, than after Christ, who has triumphed over them all, abolished, and nailed them to his cross? And when this examination is rightly made, and the apostle's prohibitory injunction, "touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using," &c. rightly complied with, I believe the "weak and beggarly elements" must be rejected; bread, wine and water, as ordinances of religion, renounced, as things "which perish with the using;" and the one only and saving baptism of the gospel retained. Here the walking in newness of life, and the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, will be known. Here the earth will enjoy her sabbaths again, men resting from their own works, as God did from his. Here the morning stars will sing together, the sons of God will shout aloud for joy, and the inhabitants of Sion keep holy day to the Lord.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Is a recapitulation or summary of a number of the principle reasons against supposing the Christian commission for baptism, Matt. xxviii. can mean water.*

**T**HUS having exhibited to the view of the reader many important passages of the sacred records, with many remarks and arguments thereon, which appear to me sufficient to satisfy the minds of such as may, under divine influence and illumination, carefully weigh and consider them, that the gospel is an inward, living and spiritual dispensation, void of any mere outward, figurative and ceremonial institutions, or ordinances; I think proper here, in one view, to recapitulate and present the reader with several of the principal arguments, or reasons, why the great gospel commission, Mat. xxviii. Mark xvi. cannot be properly understood to enjoin water baptism.

I. BECAUSE every religious washing in outward water, both under John and Moses, was symbolical of inward purification, and pointed to it, as effected "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." John's ministry, and water baptism in particular, was for Christ's manifestation to Israel. To prepare his way, by turning their minds to see the necessity, and to a desire and readiness for the reception of, and submission to, this his baptismal purification; and then expressly to decrease, as the substance should increase. The type to give place to the antitype; seeing signs and symbols were ever intended to vanish out of the way, when the substance signified by them was fully come: they being only as a schoolmaster, to lead unto Christ; who is, to every one that believeth in him, the full end of the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; because they are complete in him, without any of those representative observances,

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which only pointed at him, but can have no place in him, nor in his pure gospel dispensation.

II. BECAUSE the Greek word *en*, the common word for *in*, might have been used in the commission, as on other occasions, where *in* simply was intended, if this baptism had been only into water, verbally in the Lord's name. But the word *eis* being here used, signifying directly *into*, and so used in many other passages, shews the baptism is into the name, the virtue, life and power of God ; into holiness, meekness, purity, gentleness, divine wisdom, true judgment, and whatever communicable grace or virtue a Christian receives by ingraftment into Christ, when " cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature ; and grafted contrary to nature, into a good olive tree," as Rom. xi. 24. The ingraftment is plainly into Christ. The baptism is several times expressly declared to be into him. Nor need we doubt but the common word for teach, to wit, *didasko*, would have been used in this commission, had it not meant a converting, disciplining, baptizing kind of teaching, which gathers souls into God, their habitation, refuge, and strong tower.

III. BECAUSE the apostles were not and could not be qualified to administer this baptism, till they were endued with power from on high : could not impart, minister or communicate the Holy Ghost, but when and as they were baptized or filled with it themselves. Hence were they commanded to tarry at Jerusalem, till qualified by the outpouring of the Spirit upon them ; and thus to wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of Christ, that " John baptized with water, but they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost." And it is very absurd to suppose Christ, in directing them how and where to wait, and what for, in order to their qualification to administer his baptism, would expressly point their attention from and beyond that of water, to that of the Holy Ghost, had he

he been then giving them directions about preaching the gospel, and baptizing in water.

IV. BECAUSE in all the after instances of baptism in water (through condescension) there is not one, wherein the form of words in this commission is made use of; which it must have been in every instance, where the commission was duly observed, had it meant water, and established a form of words to be used in its administration. And how can we suppose those, who now use water, better know, are more bound by, or more duly observe, the commission, than the disciples? The disciples were so far from understanding it of water, that they never once used water, as under it; never once used the words of it, as a form in any wise proper to an outward or mere figurative performance. And does not this their total omission of those words evince that they were of an high and heavenly import, meaning nothing less than a real baptism into the divine nature the very life and substance of the Godhead, and by no means applicable to the mere outward and visible sign of this inward and spiritual immersion, ingraftment and purification? But men now presume to apply these expressions to a mere outward ceremony, and dignify immersion in water, a most unstable element, with the title of a gospel ordinance; yea, a sacrament of Christ Jesus.

V. BECAUSE when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius, and his household, through Peter's speaking to them in the life and power of the same, he was immediately made to remember (doubtless by the great and promised remembrancer) the words of Christ respecting the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Thus clearly applying them to the falling of the Holy Ghost on those Gentiles, through his ministry; that is, through the words spoken by him, whereby they should be saved, as foretold by the angel. And as only the baptism of the Holy Ghost is saving; as they did evidently receive this through Peter's ministry; as the angel told Cornelius,

nelius, Peter should tell him words by which they should be saved; and as Peter really understood the baptism they then received (through those words by him spoken, and by which they were to be saved) to be the one saving baptism of the gospel, the very same promised by Christ, in the words which were thereupon brought to his remembrance; it is evident the baptism of Christ is only inward. And more especially, as at this very time, in regard to the baptism of water, which was John's, and was for Christ's manifestation to Israel, Peter so far doubted the propriety of its administration to the Gentiles, that he even appealed to the judgment of men about it (which, how would he have dared to have done, had it been his Lord's command) and though none did forbid it, yet he only commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (the Greek word here is *en*) and not into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; these words in no wise suiting the nature and design of that outward administration.

VI. BECAUSE Peter not only never baptized any in water afterwards, that we have any account of, but expressly declares the saving baptism; both negatively, what it is not, to wit, "putting away the filth of the flesh," the proper effect of water; and positively, what it is, and by what it is effected; it effects, in its complete operation, such a thorough purification, as establishes in the soul, the answer of a good conscience towards God, and is effected by that which only can do this, the "resurrection of Jesus Christ," the light, and life, and hope of glory in us. And it will for ever be in vain for any to suppose they have received Christian baptism, unless they thus know him to be truly and experimentally "the resurrection and the life" in themselves; for this alone can produce the true sanctification and baptism of the gospel. A figure cannot save us. All the washings in water are figures. And one figure is not the sign of another figure. Neither any of the divers Mosaic washings, nor John's immersion

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sion (being all but figures) pointed to the baptism of the gospel, as to an outward figurative plunging in water; but as (which in truth it is) to an inward, spiritual washing, in the true laver of regeneration. And I think the old Mosaic typical laver might be as properly continued under the gospel, as sprinkling or dipping in water.

VII. BECAUSE Paul, a most eminent apostle, not a whit behind the chiefest, and who received his commission and his knowledge of Christ by immediate revelation (God revealing his Son in him) and thereby knew his will, and the true spiritual nature of his baptism; speaking of that with water, declares positively, that "Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel;" and even thanks God he had baptized no more; which would have been an high presumption, and misdemeanor, had he not known that baptism in water, was no more an ordinance of Christ, than circumcision made with hands. But knowing the circumcision, and baptism of the new covenant, were altogether inward, he says, writing to the Colossians, "ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," chap. ii. 10, 11, 12: thus plainly rejecting both outward circumcision and baptism, the one as much as the other; and shewing that the inward, wherein they are complete in Christ, is a real putting off the body of sin, a death unto it, a real burial with Christ, and rising with him; which is so far from dipping under, and rising out of, the water, that it is only by a faith that is so living, and so much above all that is outward, and merely of man, that it is truly and powerfully of the very operation of God in the soul. Here is that resurrection of Christ, by which the good



conscience is witnessed in Christian baptism. And having thus shewn believers' baptism to be as entirely inward as their circumcision, he immediately and very pertinently reminds them of Christ's " blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances," and taking " it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ;" cautions them to let no man judge them in respect to those outward things, which are but " a shadow of things to come," and then roundly queries of them, " wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments or elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances ?" This shews, " dead with Christ," or planted in the likeness of his death, is not a burial into the rudiments, or elements, as in outward baptism, but " dead with Christ, from the rudiments ;" therefore he immediately enjoins, " touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men." By all which we not only perceive his full rejection of all the mere shadowy ordinances, but that he was so far from esteeming water baptism to be Christ's, that he was truly thankful to God that he had never used it, even in condescension, but in a very few instances ; and that he considered the real baptism into Christ to include a death with him from all those rudimentary or elementary things which perish with the using ; and which, therefore, are not to be touched, tasted, or even handled, as ordinances, nor by any means subjected to, by those who are dead to them by baptism into death with Christ.

VIII. BECAUSE all those who truly believe, and in this faith of the operation of God are baptized according to the commission, are hereby saved, as promised by Christ, in giving the commission ; which is not true of all who are baptized in water. Simon the forcerer both believed and was baptized ; and yet, at the same time, was so far from having any lot, part, or portion, in gospel faith, or baptism, that he was in the very " gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity ;" which

which no doubt has been the case with too many beside Simon : whereas all who are baptized according to the commission, and therein witness the floor of the heart thoroughly cleansed, are baptized into Christ, have put him on, the " whole armour of light," and thus being planted in the likeness of his death, are alive in the likeness of his resurrection, in true newness of life.

IX. BECAUSE we have no account, nor the least reason to believe, the first apostles were ever baptized in water, after John baptized them ; for " Jesus himself baptized not." And we have heard of none else authorized to baptize them therein, but John ; and so they being outwardly baptized only into John's baptism ; if Christ's was also outward, and John's was not it, they never had it. And then they would have been sent to baptize others with a baptism themselves never received. But they received freely, and were freely to give, and could not give what they never received, nor what they did receive, before they had received it : and therefore were under an absolute necessity to wait till they actually did receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, before they possibly could baptize others with it. This they did receive, and this they did administer ; and their not presuming, nor being allowed by their Lord, to attempt baptizing according to the commission, till first thus baptized themselves, shews evidently what the baptism of the commission was, and that the qualification for its administration was through the same baptism first received in themselves, the endowment of power from on high. But had the commission intended John's baptism, that they were qualified to administer, and did administer before ; had it intended water, and yet not as John's, they never receiving it after the commission, any more than before, were no more qualified to administer it afterwards, than before. Hence, it results, that Christ's is that they waited for, received, and then, through the communications

munications of it, administered to others; that is, the one baptism of the gospel.

X. BECAUSE whoever receive Christ's baptism, are initiated thereby into the church of the first born, the pillar and ground of truth, and have their names written in heaven, have the white stone, and new name: and being buried, and rising with Christ, are joint heirs with him; and he is not ashamed to call them brethren, they in all things reverently ascribing to him the pre-eminence. But this is by no means true of all that are baptized into water. This is in substance somewhat the same as the 8th reason; but may serve to shew, that as baptism in water is not saving, so it never initiates any into the church of Christ, however it is extolled as an initiatory ordinance.

XI. BECAUSE Christ himself, though he was circumcised, baptized, &c. outwardly, in order to fulfil, terminate, blot out, and for ever disannul, all such ceremonies, never circumcised or baptized others outwardly; nor ever ordered any of the multitudes that believed on him, that we have any account of, to receive either. He even washed his disciples' feet, and taught them to wash one another's; but never baptized them in water, which we may venture to believe he would by no means have omitted, had it been his own baptism, the one saving and perpetual baptism of all true believers.

XII. BECAUSE he did baptize them with the holy Spirit, declaring he sent them even as his Father sent him; that is, anointed with the Holy Ghost, that they should do the works which he did (baptize with the Holy Ghost, before, was a work which he did.) And as, in order to qualify them, he breathed on them, and bid them receive the Holy Ghost, this was truly sending them as he was sent, and turning their minds, and fixing their dependance, on the like anointing for qualification for the like services.

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XIII. BECAUSE baptism in water is certainly one of the old things, one of the things that can be shaken; and not one that remains, when and where all are shaken and removed, that can be shaken; not one that can remain, when and where not only the earth, not only sin, carnality, and earthly mindedness, but also heaven; things esteemed heavenly, and which were once really ordinances of God, are thoroughly shaken, and all removed, but what cannot be shaken; which alone can remain in this truly gospel state. The rejoicing of true Christians is in that which God creates, after the old heavens and old earth are shaken, and all typical righteousness is passed away; that is, in the pure antitypical righteousness which must remain, because it cannot be shaken, but is of the very nature of, and pertaineth to, the new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, in its pure, uncumbered, unceremonious simplicity and beauty. The elements (these elementary, figurative observations) are known, in the truly gospel state, to melt with fervent gospel heat; whilst too many are retaining these, and expecting the outward material elements to be melted with outward material fire, at the end of this outward material world. Thus missing the marrow and substance of things, through the outwardness of their ideas and expectations.

XIV. BECAUSE it is certain, that it does please God to save some through the foolishness of preaching, to wit, such as truly believe. No soul can be saved, but according to God's mercy "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This is Christ's baptism. And hence it follows, that every soul saved through preaching, must thereby be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, or witness the regenerating washing, and renewal of the Holy Ghost. For this being that without which none can be saved, it is idle to think of preaching, saving or contributing towards the salvation of any, but through the work of this baptism. If preaching at any time contributes  
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more or less to salvation, it certainly contributes in the same degree to this spiritual baptism. Thus Paul begat souls to God through the gospel. But no ministry that is not baptizing, can ever do this. And this is the reason why they who run without God's sending and qualifications, do not profit the people. They cannot baptize them into the name by all their arts of rhetoric, and powers of elocution. That is a work surpassing the utmost influence of all such unauthorized ministry, and effected instrumentally, by no other preaching than that which has its efficacy from the power received from on high. This even the apostles were under an absolute necessity to wait for, and receive too, before they could thus teach baptizing. And the same necessity of waiting for the same qualification will remain, to all Christ's true ministers, to the world's end. Indeed the substance of the injunction, tarry at Jerusalem till you are endued, &c. rests now with equal force on all who are equally observant of divine direction, in the work of the gospel. And to these Christ's words for ever hold good, "he that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Mat. x. 40. They who truly receive Christ, receive his baptism. Hence none truly receive his ministers, and their ministry, but therein and therethrough they receive him and his baptism. This must hold good for ever; they who truly receive him, know it. It would be as true, if it had never been so expressed. Experience would livingly confirm it. But they rejoice that this great truth is so clearly, and by so many modes of expression, established in the sacred records. And their prayers are sincerely and fervently to God, that seeking souls may be enabled to see, hear and believe it, to the salvation of their souls, in the saving operations of the one only soul-saving baptism of Jesus.

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